

Subscribe

The Bulletin's aim is to address matters related to the organisation and delivery of AHP services, and includes items of direct interest to AHP staff.

If you receive the bulletin direct on email, please forward it to other colleagues who may be interested. If you know any staff who don't have access to an electronic copy, please print it out for them. They may also obtain paper copies by phoning the NHS response line on 08701 555455.

Staff can receive the AHP Bulletin directly by e-mail each month by e-mailing their details to DH-Test-Emails@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Clicking on the above link will give you access to a pre-addressed email. Please include the following – your name, organisation, full postal address (including postcode), phone and fax numbers and email address. Your preferred email address can be your personal one at work or home (or both), or the address of a manager or group of people at work, whichever is most convenient.

Other Department of Health bulletins covering a range of topics of interest to NHS staff are also available. They include the **Chief Executive Bulletin**, **Chief Medical Officer's Bulletin** and **The Chief Nursing Officer's Bulletin**. They can be found on the DH website at www.doh.gov.uk/publications/bulletins.htm

TOP NEWS

Pay deal for staff – update

Full details of the new NHS pay deal – Agenda for Change – have now been published for consultation

In addition to the new pay system, measures to support staff career development are also highlighted.

The four UK health departments, NHS employers and other staff organisations concluded their negotiations last November.

Now staff members across the NHS are to be asked if they approve of the plans.

The document is at www.doh.gov.uk/agendaforchange/proposedagreement.htm

Details of the proposed pay bands for common NHS jobs are contained in the *NHS Job Evaluation Handbook* at

www.doh.gov.uk/agendaforchange/jobevaluationhandbook.htm

If staff support the new structure, it is expected to be piloted across England early this summer.

The HR departments of all trusts will be sent hard copies of the documents.

Changing Workforce – piloting new roles

AHP staff roles are being revamped across the health service as the NHS engages in new ways of delivering improved patient care.

Through the *Changing Workforce programme*, run by the NHS Modernisation Agency, issues such as staff shortages and job satisfaction are being addressed.

The programme was born out of *The NHS Plan*, which put a strong emphasis on new ways of working within the health service, not least among AHPs.

Already 16 pilot schemes are up and running across the country, focusing on a range of areas. These include mental health, older people and primary care services.

Each pilot scheme is different but all share these principles:

- how changing roles use new systems to ensure clarity and accountability
- building on good practice
- maintaining close links with other

NHS development schemes, such as *Agenda for Change* and *Improving Working Lives*

■ balancing new roles with the need for continuing personal development and lifelong learning.

The work of each pilot site is carried out by a steering group, which helps facilitate the work and ensure key stakeholders are involved.

Its key tasks are to clear any external obstacles to change, generate new ideas and encourage local involvement.

The success of each pilot is measured by set targets for improving patient care, job satisfaction and staff retention.

Further details are at: <http://www.modern.nhs.uk/cwp>

Continued on page 2

Contents

- Top News – including Agenda for Change update.....page 1

- Voicepiece – Kay Eastpage 2
- How to have your say ...page 2
- News in briefpage 3

- The Digest – information at a glancepage 4
- Diary – conferencespage 5



Chief health professions officer Kay East outlines the opportunities for staff to take on new consultant therapist roles as part of the drive to improve patient care.

In the past, in order to progress their careers, frontline allied health professionals have had to dispense with the clinical side of their work and take on a more managerial role. Now this is changing with the introduction of the consultant therapist role.

For some time now we've been trying to explore and encourage new ways of working so that frontline practitioners – those working closest to patients – can make significant improvements to patient care. These are improvements that might have been held back in the past by outdated practices and institutional barriers.

Across the NHS, we're now seeing therapists in all specialities taking direct referrals from GPs, running clinics and fast-tracking patients to the most appropriate services.

AHPs have demonstrated versatility and the capability to adapt and respond to changing demands. They bridge the gaps between primary and secondary care. They work in hospitals as well as community and provide care for thousands of people in their homes.

Basically, AHPs know a great deal about patient needs. The consultant therapist role will take that hands-on experience and knowledge and use it to ensure that services and investment are planned at an organisational level.

It's a real opportunity to make a substantial difference to patient care, while, at the same time, elevating the profile of AHPs into the core thinking of the NHS.

I'd urge those AHPs who want to lead change and advance their career aspirations to present the case – to your trusts and PCTs – for developing your roles either as consultant therapists or in other ways.

You start from a strong position – you know patients. In an NHS that's changing to become increasingly patient-centred, that is vital.

I'm extremely keen to hear your comments about any of the issues in this bulletin. Please send your thoughts to ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Kay East

Changing Workforce – case study

A new consultant therapist role has been set up thanks to a partnership between Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust and Salford Primary Care Trust.

The new consultant in foot health has surgical podiatry skills and is able to treat patients with orthopaedically compromised feet as well as having extensive knowledge of high-risk foot conditions.

The roles of other members of the podiatry team have been extended to enable them to meet the needs of these patients.

The podiatry department wanted to develop a clinic to meet the needs of a particular group of patients who may have high-risk problems due to diabetes, vascular insufficiency or rheumatological problems.

The Changing Workforce programme was able to provide funding to support this new way of working and to enable members of the team to undertake some of the training required to extend their skills. This included radiology training so that they can order x-rays.

Carys Kinsella of the Changing Workforce programme described the

subsequent impact on both patient care and staff development as 'very positive'.

"Effectively, patients are seen in a one-stop shop, where previously they may have had to visit a number of departments during the course of their treatment.

"For those requiring surgery, continuity of care is ensured as they are seen by the same staff before and after their surgery, with the surgery itself being performed by the consultant."

One satisfied patient said: "This is great. I thought I would have to wait and come back another time and you have done everything today."

Carys added: "Staff have also found it beneficial, and have a better understanding of each of the roles."

One staff podiatrist said: "Now I can do more things for the patients, it feels so much better and the patients are thanking us!"

Other roles developed in the pilot cover nutrition support, education health workers and audiology services.

■ Contact: Carys Kinsella 0161 787 5563

New roles in diabetes

Under the recently published *National Service Framework (NSF) Diabetes Delivery Strategy*, everyone with or at risk from diabetes, will be offered regular check-ups and treatment by 2006.

Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust and North and South Peterborough Primary Care Trusts are already producing tangible results.

New roles in diabetes care have been tested, resulting in

the recruitment of a new specialist Diabetes Care Technician.

The aim of the pilot was to introduce new ways of delivering treatment and staff gaining greater job satisfaction while improving their job prospects.

Co-ordinator Mimi Hills said the feedback received so far had been 'very positive' both from patients and staff.

■ Contact: Mimi Hills 01733 875796

Have your say

The Allied Health Professions Branch in the Department of Health welcomes feedback on any aspect of the information that we have included in the Bulletin. E-mail ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk or write to AHP Branch, Wellington House, 135 – 155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG.

The role of radiographers

A guide examining the role of radiographers in the context of The NHS Plan and NHS Cancer Plan has been produced.

Demands on radiographers are increasing, resulting in high priority being given to the issue of staff recruitment and retention.

Other topics covered include training opportunities, teamwork and changing roles.

The number of NHS diagnostic radiographers increased from 10,360 in 1997 to 11,160 in 2001 – up more than seven per cent.

The guide, which gives an overview of actions being taken at national level, can be found at:

www.doh.gov.uk/cancer/radiographersupdate.htm

Advisory network

The Department of Health is to recruit from AHP staff nationally to help form a network of advisers.

Those selected will offer independent, specialist advice to other AHP staff, ensuring they know how and why national issues are affecting and influencing local policy decisions.

The network will also support the work being done by the department's own branch team.

None of the roles are being advertised as yet but more information will be released by the department in due course.

Comments to ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk

AHP key roles workshop

A workshop is planned for April as part of the next stage to develop a definition of 'key' AHP roles.

Staff who previously contacted this bulletin with details of the work they are doing to develop such roles have been thanked for their feedback.

Further details of the workshop will be published in next month's bulletin but the feedback already received is seen as a helpful development as it focuses on the roles played by AHPs in delivering modernised health and social care.

Comments to ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk

New Appointments

The Department of Health has appointed two new health professions advisers - Shelagh Morris and Karen Dinsdale.

Karen is currently the primary care development manager (therapies) in the Directorate of Health and Social Care in London.

Shelagh is the director of allied health professions with Sherwood Hospitals NHS Trust.

They will concentrate on children and mental health issues respectively when they take up their new roles in March and April.

Modernising audiology services

The very latest in digital hearing aids will be available free to thousands of people who are deaf or hard of hearing under a £94 million programme announced by the health secretary.

Around 1.8 million people in England – including 18,000 children – who currently use hearing aids stand to benefit.

In April 2000, the Government began making digital hearing aids available on the NHS for the first time.

From April 2003, almost a third of NHS audiology departments will be providing digital hearing aids.

They will be available in every hearing aid service throughout England by April 2005.

www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/IntPress.nsf/page/2003-0048?OpenDocument

Health Professions Council (HPC) seeks partners

The HPC, a new independent, UK-wide body, responsible for regulating standards within the 12 healthcare professions it covers, is looking for people from within the AHP sector to undertake work on its behalf.

To help ensure the effective regulation of health professionals in the UK, the HPC needs to set up a series of formal relationships with individuals and partners by 1 April.

The council is looking for suitably qualified and motivated people to work in positions including conduct and competence panel members,

legal assessors and medical assessors.

www.hpc-uk.org or email partners@hpc-uk.org

Recruitment and retention handbook

AHP staff involved in recruitment and retention will be able to benefit from a new guide, due out on April 6.

Sharing Strengths details various ways in which trusts and PCTs can use their resources to produce good practice and also how to utilise other sources of funding.

It highlights what is going on nationally and how people can move on, and recruit from elsewhere in the health service.

The handbook is being produced by the Department of Health.

More details will follow in next month's bulletin.

A Downing Street reception for AHPs

More than 150 allied health professionals and healthcare scientists were invited to 10 Downing Street for a reception with the Prime Minister.

The delegation included managers and frontline staff, all of whom were able to raise issues with Tony Blair.

Chief health professions officer Kay East described it as a 'really enjoyable event showing just what a valuable contribution these professionals make in delivering patient care.'

TheDigest

Did you see the news about...? If you missed an announcement or new development of interest to you, the chances are it could be listed in The Digest. Each month in The Digest we feature subjects of note including where to obtain more information.

Action On developments

The NHS Modernisation Agency's Action On programme targets long-wait specialities by encouraging innovation and good practice. More than 50 pilot sites have so far focused on dermatology, ear, nose and throat and orthopaedics.

The scheme is now targeting general and plastic surgery and urology. Pilot proposals are invited. Up to £75,000 a year of funding is available. www.modern.nhs.uk/action-on or Eric Ludlow on 0116 222 1422

Prescribing for AHPs

Ambulance personnel and optometrists have attended a workshop identifying the potential benefits for patients and the NHS if AHPs and optometrists are able to supply/prescribe medicines on the NHS. Chaired by Kay East, the chief health professions officer, the workshop gave Department of Health representatives the opportunity to explain the processes involved. ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk

NHSnet upgrade

Online appointment bookings and prescription transfers within the NHS will be much faster as a result of a £45 million upgrade to the NHSnet. The network, which carries more than one million messages a month, is being given broadband status. Due for completion by March 2004, it will also improve access to electronic health records. www.nhsia.nhs.uk/nhsnet/pages/connecting/bandwidth/upgrades.asp

AHP informatics workshop

Sir John Pattison, the Department of Health's director of research, analysis and information, has challenged AHPs to embrace information technology to help deliver improved services. Speaking at the December workshop, he said it would help deliver a 'truly patient-centred service'.

Key points highlighted also included knowledge management and disseminating good practice. ahp-branch@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Health and social care change agent team (CAT)

The team was set up in January 2002 as part of a £300 million investment to improve hospital discharge figures.

It is also working to support the implementation of the National Service Framework (NSF) for older people and working towards a single system of health and social care. More information available soon.

Health circulars – issuing alert letters

Alert letters are sent to NHS bodies to inform them of any registered health professionals whose performance or conduct could place patients or staff at serious risk. It ensures organisations know about any health professional who may reasonably be considered to pose a serious risk because their performance seriously compromises a clinical team's effective functioning. www.doh.gov.uk/publications/coinh.html

Ambulance trust staff praised

Lancashire Ambulance NHS Trust and NHS Direct North West Coast provide a 'high quality' service to patients, the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) concluded. The clinical governance review highlighted the 'professional and caring manner' of staff when dealing with patients and callers. www.chi.nhs.uk

Eliminating mixed sex accommodation

98 per cent of NHS trusts are now providing single-sex sleeping accommodation, and 93 per cent of trusts are providing segregated bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women. A further two per cent plan to deliver this standard by the end of March. The NHS target for both categories was 95 per cent by December 2002 meaning targets have been reached. http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/cm030114/wmstext/30114m02.htm#30114m02.html_spm13

Diabetes delivery

Every person with or at risk from diabetes will be offered regular check-ups and the appropriate treatment by 2006, under the Diabetes National Service Framework Delivery Strategy. The framework highlights how AHPs will play a key role in the delivery of care. By 2007 all PCTs will provide eye-screening services for all people with diabetes. www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/diabetes/index.htm

NHS patient choice expanded

More patients in more areas of the country will get increased access to health services, under a new Government 'choice' initiative. Health secretary Alan Milburn announced the expansion plans at a conference of NHS chief executives. It follows the success of two pilot schemes covering heart and cataract surgery. The main benefit for patients is that they will have the opportunity to receive treatment at hospitals other than their local one. www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/IntPress.nsf/page/2003-0053?OpenDocument or read the full speech at www.doh.gov.uk/speeches/milburnfeb03choice.htm

Health profession 'titles'

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has obtained legal clarification over the use of protected titles by the unregistered sector until 2005. It relates mainly to people training at private institutions whose courses are not approved for state registration. After 1 April, anyone using the common titles of the professions regulated by the HPC must be on its register otherwise they could face prosecution. www.hpc-uk.org/docs/press/20030115_protected_titles.htm

PCT ratings

Primary care and mental health trusts are to receive their first NHS performance ratings this summer. The ratings show how well local services are performing. PCTs and mental health trusts will join acute, specialist and ambulance trusts in this year's tables. www.doh.gov.uk/performance/2003

Back pain web launch

An internet information service has been launched to provide better public information on back pain. Research for the Doctor Patient Partnership (DPP) shows nearly two thirds of people would go to their GP for back problems. With 60 per cent of the population reporting back problems, this represents a huge burden for primary care providers. The 'Beating Back Pain' campaign provides information and practical support. www.dpp.org.uk

European Working Time Directive (EWTD) guidance

NHS trusts are to receive guidance on how to comply with the EWTD for doctors who are training. Trusts are running pilot schemes to examine how the new rules can be successfully implemented. Many involve innovative roles for AHPs and non-medical staff. Guidance is at www.doh.gov.uk/workingtime or queries to EWTD@doh.gsi.gov.uk

NHS bowel cancer programme

A national screening programme is one of the benefits of the new NHS bowel cancer programme. National cancer director Professor Mike Richards also announced new targets for speeding up diagnosis and improving treatments of the disease. This will require an increase in the medical workforce as well as increased training. www.nhs.uk/nhsupdate/news.asp?newsid=596

Patient watchdogs being abolished:

Community Health Councils (CHC) will be abolished on 1 September this year. It follows the launch of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) on 1 January. The CPPIH is responsible for getting more members of the public involved in making decisions over local health and will be providing training to help them do that. CHCs' functions will be taken over by patient forums and committees. www.nhs.uk/nhsupdate/news.asp?newsid=594&p=d

Diary

Modernising cancer services conference

Around 1,500 delegates are expected to attend the Modernising Cancer Services – Excellence in Patient Care conference, being held by the Cancer Services Collaborative (CSC) at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham, on 7 March.

Chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby, scheduled speakers include: national cancer director Professor Mike Richards; Hazel Blears MP; NHS Modernisation Agency director David Fillingham; CSC national clinical lead Professor David Kerr; director of the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) Dr Peter Homa and CSC national director Janet Williamson.

■ www.modern.nhs.uk/cancer or <http://195.40.181.94/cscconference/home.asp>

Regional child health conference and exhibition

Taking place on 25 February, this is the latest in a series of 18 regional conferences and exhibitions for those interested in the care of babies and infants and the education of parents.

The venue is the Marriott Hotel, Liverpool.

■ **Contact:** Profile Productions Tel: 020 8832 7311 or info@profileproductions.co.uk

Difficult decisions in clinical practice

This one-day conference examines the key ethical issues and principles that health sector professionals come across on a daily basis.

An interactive 'ethics surgery' will also provide an opportunity for staff to discuss topical ethical dilemmas.

It takes place on 5 March at the Manchester Conference Centre.

■ **Contact:** Healthcare Events on 020 8541 1399 or info@healthcare-events.co.uk

Recruitment and training in healthcare

This two-day conference, taking place at the Birmingham NEC on 19/20 March, will provide recruitment and training and development opportunities for healthcare professionals, plus those wanting to work within or return to healthcare.

■ **Contact:** Sterling Events on 0151 709 8979 or rth@sterlingevents.co.uk