

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 e-mail, 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 e-mail to doh@prologue.uk.com

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

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 e-mail. Please include the following – your name, organisation, full postal address (including postcode), telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address. Your preferred e-mail address can be your personal one at work or home (or both), or the address of a manager or group of people at your work, whichever is most convenient.

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

TOP NEWS

Ministerial reshuffle

John Hutton remains health minister with responsibility for the allied health professions following the Prime Minister's summer reshuffle.

Mr Hutton's portfolio includes NHS workforce issues including pay reforms, recruitment and retention, education and training, changing professional roles and the regulation of health care professions.

His remit also covers primary care services, NHS performance, access and IT.

Health secretary **John Reid** will have overall strategic responsibility for NHS improvement, delivery and reform, finance and resources.

New health minister **Rosie Winterton** will cover emergency care, NHS Direct, adult mental health services, clinical negligence, patient and public involvement, diabetes services, transplants and organ donation, dentistry and pharmacy issues.

Dr Stephen Ladyman will be the minister for community care, covering adult social services, older people's

services, policy on carers, children's health services, services for disabled people and long-term medical conditions.

Norman Warner will be the Government health spokesman in the Lords but will also cover NHS performance ratings, the NHS inspections system, quality and clinical governance, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, pharmaceutical industry issues, genetics and biotechnology, departmental agencies and research and development.

Melanie Johnson becomes the public health minister with responsibility for cancer, heart disease, tobacco policy, communicable diseases, immunisation, health inequalities, drug and alcohol misuse and sexual health matters.

More information at www.doh.gov.uk/about/ministers.htm

AHP recruitment

Raising awareness of careers in the AHPs has to start early. Are you working with your human resources department, local workforce development confederation (WDC) and school/careers advisors, using material from your professional body, the Department of Health and NHS Careers?

Are you linking to the national or any local WDC-led recruitment campaigns, or a Job Shop Day (next one 18 September)? Are you offering to assist with broadening

access to your profession, by offering placements to students from cadet schemes, in service training or accelerated courses?

Continued on page 2

Contents

Top News

Ministerial reshuffle	page 1
AHP recruitment	page 1-2
Radiotherapy recruitment and retention – case study	page 3
Allied health professionals with special interests.....	page 3

AHP adviser on children's services	page 4
Innovation honour for physiotherapist	page 4

Voicepiece

Views from the chief health professions officer	page 2
---	--------

News in brief.....	page 5-6
--------------------	----------

Diary	page 6
-------------	--------

The Digest	page 7
------------------	--------



Chief health professions officer Kay East talks about the need for AHPs to make their voices heard at every organisational level

I am now building up a team of advisors with frontline experience of the NHS and it is critical that we use their experience and advice to develop the role of AHPs in the changing NHS.

Working within the Department of Health requires us to tap into advice from all the allied health professions who make key contributions to service improvements. This network of advisors will bring with them knowledge of best practice and initiatives which are delivering faster, more convenient and better care for patients.

We have also consulted widely on the 10 key roles for AHPs and have had responses from almost 1,900 AHPs as well as students. I am pleased that the consultation has just been completed so we can launch these key roles in the summer. This will demonstrate how AHPs are extending their roles and practice and taking greater responsibility for improving services which provide real quality patient care.

But AHPs still need to put themselves in more authoritative positions in the workplace, for example, by becoming consultants and engaging with PCTs.

I have highlighted before that the development of consultant posts is moving slowly but there are AHPs who are demonstrating their commitment to service and role redesign by taking up more of these opportunities. We still need to

AHPs still need to put themselves in more authoritative positions in the workplace, for example, by becoming consultants and engaging with PCTs

support this progression by continuing to share best practice and develop advanced learning. I am pleased NHS trusts now have more freedom and support to establish consultant posts, as I know there have been some problems working with local organisations to develop them.

Many of you have highlighted the practical difficulties you face due to the amount of organisational change. It is really important that we use our influence to promote the development of services to remove artificial boundaries that interfere with effective care pathways.

I also keep reinforcing the need for everyone to be engaging with their PCT as they are responsible for promoting integrated care. I am pleased many AHPs are developing services in primary care that were traditionally provided in secondary care.

Now more help is at hand for AHPs with the publication of an Allied Health Professionals Self Assessment Tool published by National Primary and Care Trust Development Programme (NatPaCT). Copies have gone to all AHP professional executive committee members, the regional leadership leads, chief executives and directors of nursing in all PCTs and NatPaCT area facilitators. It will help you to assess your services to determine future strategies as well as training and development needs. The NatPaCT area facilitators will be working with AHPs to determine locally how to take this forward.

This is a tool primarily for AHPs working in PCTs but it can be used by all sectors. The key is to be proactive, build better services for patients and influence development in your area.

The assessment tool is at www.natpact.nhs.uk

Continued from page 1

Are you actively involved with encouraging returners and applicants from abroad? Your own professional body will have helpful advice and/or material you can access.

The Department of Health has given the national AHP Forum £100,000 to promote the recruitment and retention of all AHPs and, in recognition of their particular problems, another £100,000 to the Society of Radiography for work on both diagnostic and therapeutic radiography.

Influencing workforce planning through the commissioning of services is key to raising the profile of AHPs and increasing the number of posts. Are you on, or well connected to, your local professional executive committee and/or trust board and are you linked to your WDC or strategic health authority through a local AHP clinical network/forum?

Helen Wiseman, the AHP lead for recruitment and retention at the Department of Health, said: "When advertising posts, remember to highlight why your service is attractive – blow that trumpet! We are often reticent about promoting the excellent work, facilities, development opportunities, support and mentoring which the professions routinely offer."

Publications on recruitment include:

AHPs in the NHS March 2003 – to order contact 0845 6060655

The NHS Recruitment Handbook May 2003 – to order contact 08701 555455 quote ref. 31182.

AHPs Returning to the NHS – to order contact 0845 6060655

For further information contact Helen Wiseman at Helen.wiseman@doh.gsi.gov.uk or on 0113 254 6454 or 07970 904917

■ In the next bulletin, Helen will talk about retention.

Radiotherapy recruitment and retention – case study

Come September this year, there will no be vacancies in therapeutic radiography at Sheffield's Weston Park cancer hospital.

Seven new radiographers are due to start work in the department shortly, taking the team to its full complement of around 80 radiographers, clerical and clinical support staff.

Many of the radiographers at the hospital work part-time – just one of several employment opportunities which have been introduced to help recruit and retain the local radiography workforce.

This common sense approach, mixed with innovation, enables the department to boast its success in tackling the national problem of recruitment and retention in radiotherapy.

The turnaround in Sheffield has been led by Moira Tomlinson, senior manager for radiation services at Weston Park, part of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

She said: "We found ourselves in the same position as everyone else, needing to attract and keep staff. Our approach is to keep staff in the department happy as this reflects on our patients."

As well as adopting flexible working practices, staff are involved in decision-making. They recently decided not to use agency staff and fill gaps on rotas between themselves.

A recruitment strategy has been introduced which focuses on attracting local students who want to stay in Sheffield after training and Moira and her colleagues work hard promoting radiotherapy as a career to local schools.

The team works closely with Sheffield Hallam University ensuring potential students choose the radiotherapy course for the right reasons. "We don't want people to come into the profession only to leave further down the line," said Moira.

Weston Park also plans to improve its facilities, making it an even more

attractive place to work. It is bidding with Sheffield Hallam University and South Yorkshire Workforce Development Confederation to build a skills centre – a fully-equipped training resource for radiographers and other professionals.

Weston Park's success in recruitment and retention owes much to the commitment of staff, says Moira. "I've got good staff who have supported me; they are committed and are willing to try new things where they can see a potential benefit to the department."

For further information contact moira.tomlinson@sth.nhs.uk

NHS Recruitment Handbook

A new *NHS Recruitment Handbook* has been published by the Department of Health to provide information, resources and good practice in the recruitment of all NHS staff.

The handbook sets out the national and international recruitment and return strategies. It demonstrates how these initiatives, in partnership with local innovation, have been applied successfully with a series of case studies, to make good practice the norm.

The handbook is available from Department of Health Publications on 08701 555 455 (please quote reference 31182).

For further information contact Ashley Moore on 0113 254 5701 or e-mail ashley.moore@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Allied health professionals with special interests

Work has started on developing a framework for AHPs with special interests (AHPwSI).

The move, by the Department of Health, follows the GP and nurse with special interest frameworks launched this year.

Already GPwSIs are helping to improve patient choice, cut waiting times and provide services closer to home.

The AHP framework will recognise that, by taking on or developing specialist roles, AHPs can offer patients a wider range of treatment in primary care.

Providing expertise or undertaking more procedures traditionally carried out in hospitals will offer patients greater convenience and shorter waits.

The framework will be a vital tool for the NHS – particularly primary care trusts – to ensure the skills of the whole workforce are being used to redesign services where needed.

Many AHPs are already working in primary care and have a special interest whether it is providing services to a specific care or diagnostic group. The framework will build on this experience. This work is inclusive of all AHP professions and is not exclusive to consultant AHPs and extended scope practitioners.

The group taking the work forward is made up of clinicians and department officials as well as

representatives of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP). The AHP Forum has signalled its support for this work and a representative sits on the group.

A conference – *Primary Care Practitioners with Special Interests* – is being held in London on 6 November. The key event for both managers and clinicians is aimed at GPs, Nurses and AHPs and is supported by the RCN, RCGP and AHP Forum.

Further guidance on the expansion of primary care is at www.doh.gov.uk/pricare

AHP adviser on children's services

AHP adviser Karen Dinsdale will be leading on children's services in her new role at the Department of Health.

The agenda for children's services is currently dominated by the *National Service Framework for Children*. The first part – hospital standards – was published in April along with a report on the development of standards of care for children's health and social care services.

Karen, who first qualified as a physiotherapist in 1985, said: "I am particularly keen to develop a productive relationship with my colleagues in the Department for Education and Skills which I see as crucial to ensuring we approach the agenda for children in a joined-up way."

Speech and language therapy is high on Karen's agenda.

"Despite some concerns about the provision of speech and language therapy for children, it is



Karen, who is also leading on primary care AHP issues at the department.

"The work is usually characterised by close collaboration with education locally, joint training with colleagues in education, service redesign and a service delivered within the educational setting wherever possible."

Spreading good practice across the service is another one of Karen's

clear that there is some excellent work out there in the service and significant modernisation going on, often without additional resources," said

main objectives – and this bulletin will become a regular output for these.

Karen qualified at St Mary's Hospital, London and spent over 10 years specialising in musculo-skeletal physiotherapy. In 1999, she became the associate director for primary care in Tower Hamlets and led a review and restructuring of the community nursing service. She joined the London directorate for health and social care as primary care development manager in 2001.

More information on the children's national service framework at www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/children.htm

Karen would welcome views from AHPs and examples of good practice involving children's services. Contact: Karen.dinsdale@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Innovation honour for physiotherapist

A superintendent physiotherapist has won a top accolade for creating an innovative service for people with facial paralysis.

Lorraine Clapham of Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust won the Outstanding Achiever Award for allied health professionals at the Health and Social Care Awards 2003.

The Face Place is a clinic dedicated to the treatment and care of patients with facial paralysis where patients receive rehabilitation and beauty treatments.

Lorraine, who has spent five years working to improve care for these patients, said: "There's no sign that it's NHS – it looks like a proper salon with the right lighting, a massage couch and make-up facilities. But it is NHS in that there's no charge and patients love it. They can come into a safe environment and it helps encourage confidence and independence."

As part of the award Lorraine now has £15,000 to spend on the service.

She said: "I am totally overwhelmed by this award but what it does do is acknowledge the need for services like ours throughout the country to support these patients. I want to use the money to go around the country promoting this unique service to GPs."

Double honour for Knowsley PCT

Staff at Knowsley Primary Care Trust won the Improving Working Lives Award for its flexible working scheme for podiatrists and the Children's Award for its children and young person's smoking cessation and prevention initiative.

Of the flexible working scheme, the acting head of podiatry Samantha Ashton-Mort said: "Staff report high levels of satisfactions with the scheme. For some it has reduced childcare costs, they have more time with their children and increased leisure opportunities."

The scheme allows staff to identify their preferred working patterns, setting out the total hours they want to work in each year,

The Health and Social Care Awards, now in their third year, recognise the achievements of staff as well as provide an opportunity to share best practice.

The full list of winners is at www.doh.gov.uk/healthandsocialcareawards

Useful websites

www.doh.gov.uk/cno

www.doh.gov.uk/pricare

www.doh.gov.uk/waitingbookingchoice

www.modernnhs.nhs.uk

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.

Supply of medicines by AHPs

The number of professions which can supply medicines under Patient Group Directions is to be expanded.

At present, all AHPs can supply a medicine to a patient under a patient-specific direction – a written instruction by a doctor or dentist.

In addition, chiropodists, orthoptists, physiotherapists, radiographers, ambulance paramedics and optometrists can supply medicines to patients under a Patient Group Direction (PGD) – a written instruction for the supply or administration of medicines to a group of patients not individually identified.

The department has made it clear that the majority of clinical care should still be provided on an individual, patient-specific basis and PGDs should be reserved for those limited situations where there is an advantage for patient care without compromising patient safety.

However, it is now looking at extending the list of AHPs that can use PGDs to dieticians, prosthetists, orthotists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists.

Consultation by the Medicines and Health Regulated Products Agency is expected to take place over the summer to develop proposals for consideration by the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM).

Consultation on children's services extended

In April, the Department of Health published Emerging Findings – a document setting out some of the early thinking on the development of the National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. The NSF will set standards across health and social care services. It has three key objectives: to put children and families at the centre of care; to develop effective partnership working so that the needs of the child are always considered and to deliver needs-led services.

The Children's NSF team would welcome your views on this paper by 10 August – now extended from 10 July. The Emerging Findings document is available at www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/children.htm

You can send your comments in

writing to: Claire Phillips, Children's National Service Framework, Room 526, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road London SE1 8UG, or by e-mail to MB-Childrens-NSF@doh.gsi.gov.uk

New clinical negligence system proposed

A new system for handling cases of clinical negligence in the NHS has been proposed by the Government's chief medical officer.

In his report Making Amends, Sir Liam Donaldson recommends the creation of a new NHS Redress Scheme to speed up the process.

Under the plans, a national body building on the work of the NHS Litigation Authority will administer the redress scheme offering remedial treatment, rehabilitation and care where needed; explanations and apologies; and financial compensation where appropriate.

Under the proposals, the redress scheme will be initially applied to NHS hospitals and, if successful, the Department of Health will consider extending it to primary care.

A consultation period will now run until October. The full report is at www.doh.gov.uk/makingamends

Genetics strategy

Advances in genomics (the branch of genetics that studies organisms in terms of their DNA) and in genetic technology will clearly make a difference to health care. Increased understanding of the molecular and genetic basis of disease will alter how we categorise, seek to prevent and treat a wide variety of diseases. The timescale and magnitude of this change is uncertain. But over time genetics will become increasingly relevant to virtually all clinical areas and across primary, secondary and tertiary care.

The genetics White Paper Our inheritance, our future – realising the potential of genetics in the NHS was launched on 24 June. It sets out a comprehensive plan that will help the NHS prepare the ground so that patients can benefit from future advances in genetics.

Text of the full White Paper and executive summary are available at www.doh.gov.uk/genetics/whitepaper.htm

Contact: geneticswhitepaper@doh.gsi.gov.uk or Diana Paine on 0207 972 5864 Diana.Paine@doh.gsi.gov.uk or Dr Alison Hill on 0207 972 5380 alison.p.hill@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Leadership development update

Building on the success of the conferences for middle managers, a new series of events is planned focusing on individual professions.

Three conferences have been held for middle managers from across allied health professions, health care science and nursing in the last six months. They have provided valuable opportunities to share new and innovative areas of work as well as facilitating discussions about policy and work life balance.

The events were part of the Leadership Development programme funded through the NHS Modernisation Agency Leadership Centre.

Plans are still being developed but the next phase of conferences will concentrate on individual professions.

A document summarising the last middle managers conference (March 2003) has proved a useful source of information, providing many examples of best practice and contacts. It is available at www.nhsleaders.nhs.uk/AHPandHCSbestpractice

For further information contact Jackie.Turnpenney@cht.nhs.uk

Shadow chair for new CSCI

The shadow chair of the new Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) has been named.

Denise Platt will lead the public body, which is expected to become operational from April 2004.

The CSCI will provide a single comprehensive, independent inspectorate for social care and will be able to assess the performance of local social services authorities.

Denise Platt has been chief inspector of social services since 1998 and director for children, older people and social care services at the Department of Health since 2001.

She was previously head of social services at the Local Government Association between 1996 and 1998. More at www.doh.gov.uk/csci/whatsnew.htm

Innovation in prison health

A project to improve health care to prisoners with diabetes has won a national innovation award.

Evelyn Ogilvie, head of nutrition and dietetics for Medway PCT, won the award from The Centre for Public Innovation for the project at Swaleside Prison, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

Evelyn's work at Swaleside – a prison for male lifers – led to the development of a multi-disciplinary one-stop shop for prisoners with diabetes, providing an annual 'MOT', general medical care and drug management advice.

"The aim was to enable the prisoners to access the same level of health care as anyone else," said Evelyn.

Funding responsibility for prison health services in England transferred from the Home Office to the Department of Health in April 2003. Over the next three years, PCTs will become responsible for the commissioning of health services to prisoners in their areas.

This transfer offers opportunities for all health professionals to improve the quality of health care offered to prisoners. Evelyn is already working on a second

innovations project, at Cookham Wood, Rochester, Kent, looking at balanced diets for female prisoners.

For more information contact evelyn.ogilvie@medwaypct.nhs.uk

More on department prison health policy at www.doh.gov.uk/prisonhealth

Copying letters to patients

All AHPs are being asked to send clinical letters they write about their patients to the patient concerned.

The aim is that all professionals working within the NHS will follow this practice as part of The NHS Plan initiative to improve patient involvement and information in their care.

The initiative particularly covers letters written by one health or social care professional to another about the patient's condition and treatment.

It is expected that this will improve communication between health professionals and patients and help patients develop a better understanding of their care.

In parts of the NHS where this is already happening through pilot schemes, both health professionals and their patients are finding this beneficial while only requiring a very minimal increase in paperwork.

Patients have spoken of the value of receiving these letters, saying it makes them feel more involved with their care, more confident about treatment and more comfortable dealing with health professionals.

A 72-year-old woman with suspected breast cancer said: "I thought the letter was a good idea because I knew exactly what they had written about me. I knew there was a chance that I had cancer in my breast before the appointment so I wasn't shocked when the consultant began talking about radiotherapy and chemotherapy."

The NHS Plan states that patients should be able to receive clinicians' letters about them as of right.

Barbara Meredith, chair of the Copying Patients' Letters Working Group, set up by the Department of Health, said: "Copying letters to patients enhances the patient's ability to share in the decision-making process about their care and treatment and to make informed choices."

Best practice guidance has been developed based on the draft guidelines contained on the working group's report and from the experiences of pilot projects and is available, along with examples of model letters, at www.doh.gov.uk/patientletters/issues.htm

Diary

Building bridges

This year's Collaborations in Health and Social Care Conference 'Building Bridges', is being held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, on 29-30 September. The focus is on building and sustaining collaborative partnerships across sector divides.

Keynote speakers include chief health professions officer Kay East.

More information at www.ueachas.org.uk

Mental health conference

The Meeting the Challenge – New Roles, Relationships and Responsibilities in Primary Care Mental Health conference takes place in October.

It aims to reflect not only the role that primary care will continue to play in mental health care provision, but also the major changes that have taken place in the NHS over the last two years.

The Manchester Institute of Health Sciences is hosting the conference, organised by the National Primary Care Research and Development Centre.

The conference is aimed at primary care professionals working in mental health, such as clinicians and managers, as well as mental health research workers and educators.

It is being held at the Manchester Conference Centre on 3 October. For more information contact Helena Wilton on 0161 275 7610 or e-mail hwilton@fs1.cpcr.man.ac.uk

CSP Congress

'Defining Practice' The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy's (CSP) Annual Congress and exhibition takes place from 17-19 October at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

During the event there will be 10 clinical programmes running, presentations of physiotherapy research, trade exhibition, the CSP's AGM and awards ceremony and the Founders' Lecture, which will be given by athlete Tanni Grey-Thompson.

For more information visit www.csp.org.uk/congress

Education and training

AHPs and education providers are being encouraged to attend the Closing the Gap conference, part of the Modernising the Education and Training for the Allied Health Professions project.

It is being organised by York St John College, School of Professional Studies. The college is a pilot site for the project, which focuses on learning, support and development in occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

The conference, which will feature various workshops, will focus on issues including changes in undergraduate education and the support given to students and staff on placements.

Chief health professions officer Kay East will talk about Agenda for Change, while the School of Professional Health Studies' head Pauline Gacal will discuss changes in education, routes, students and structures.

It takes place at York Racecourse on 15 October and more information is available by e-mailing Anne Candelin at a.candelin@yorks.ac.uk

Protected titles

AHP job titles will be protected from July following changes to the Health Professions Council (HPC) registration.

New orders are being introduced to tighten up on the rules on registration.

As from 9 July, only individuals registered with the HPC can use certain 'protected' titles, which are: art therapist, music therapist, dramatherapist, art psychotherapist; medical laboratory technician (biomedical scientist); chiropodist, podiatrist; clinical scientist; dietitian; dietician; occupational therapist; orthoptist; prosthetist, orthotist; paramedic; physiotherapist, physical therapist; radiographer, diagnostic radiographer, therapeutic radiographer; speech and language therapist and speech therapist.

'State registered' as a term to use will disappear as the titles become protected.

A process called 'grandparenting' will allow non-registered professionals who use protected titles to apply for admission to the register provided they meet certain criteria. Applications to the register via this scheme will be accepted after 9 July.

More information at www.hpc-uk.org

Health and education strategic partnerships

Learning and research are essential to ensure that AHPs can develop and deliver services expected in *The NHS Plan*.

Now local Health and Education Partnerships (HESPs) are being proposed to provide more effective strategic planning and delivery of training, learning and research to meet local needs. Strategic health authorities are now expected to initiate the establishment of HESPs.

More information is available at www.doh.gov.uk/hrinthenhs/learning/section4a/hesps.htm

More information on the Strategic Learning and Research Advisory Group for Health and Social Care, which has overall national responsibility for this work, is at www.dfes.gov.uk/stlar/

From nursing to rehab

Nursing assistants have become rehabilitation assistants under a new training programme in Doncaster.

The pilot scheme has created seven new rehabilitation assistants who received a broad knowledge of different aspects of rehabilitation under the programme – including occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, dietetics, chiropody and nursing.

The scheme, at health organisations in Doncaster, is now being revised to take account of the new health and social care worker role being introduced to the NHS.

Further information is available from Julie.Mouncher@dsh.nhs.uk or Cora.Richardson@dsh.nhs.uk

Specialist prosthetists and orthotists

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) recently held a very successful meeting for its members to investigate and define clinical specialist roles for prosthetists and orthotists.

Presentations were made by representatives from the Universities of Salford and Strathclyde and also by Shelagh Morris, health professions advisor to the Department of Health.

Members suggested areas for specialism, the level of qualification required and appropriate

levels in the career path, all with particular reference to the actual practice of prosthetists and orthotists in the UK today.

A full report of the meeting is expected from BAPO shortly, along with their recommendations which will be based on the outcomes from the day. More at www.bapo.com/

British Dietetic Association (BDA)

The serious problem of obesity was just one of the focal points of the two-day Family, Food and Health conference held by the BDA on 3-4 June.

The importance of dietary targets, activity targets and weight changes was highlighted. Other presentations included topics such as: the work of the Food Standards Agency; practical projects on the family food intake; cancer and nutrition; men's health; implementing dietary change and the importance of physical activity.

The association's new honorary chair, Susan Jones, a nutrition and dietetic services manager from Rochdale, outlined some of her key objectives for the next two years as being:

- more collaboration with other AHPs, both at a national and local level
- listening to what the professions want and planning and developing membership services accordingly
- helping members to understand and work with the NHS Modernisation Agenda
- continued collaboration with others in the nutrition world

More on the association's work at www.bda.uk.com/

Waiting, booking and choice

The Department of Health has launched a new website section focusing on waiting, booking and choice.

It sets out the vision and strategy for delivering the reforms needed to ensure NHS patients obtain faster and more convenient access to health care, including within primary care.

The new section highlights tools available to managers and gives examples of primary care trusts or practices which are giving their patients better access to NHS services.

It is at www.doh.gov.uk/waitingbookingchoice

Orthopaedics boost

A £50 million drive to eliminate long waits for NHS orthopaedic patients has been launched. It is expected to lead to an extra 41,000 patients per year undergoing operations, such as hip replacements.

The funding is being shared across NHS orthopaedic services, including primary care trusts and NHS diagnosis and treatment centres. It will be used to modernise theatres and buy new equipment.

The extra resources will deliver shorter waiting times for patients and ensure that no orthopaedic patient is waiting more than six months for treatment by December 2005.

Reducing delays

Grants worth a total of £50 million have been allocated to councils across England to help them cut the number of delayed transfers from hospitals.

Further information at www.doh.gov.uk/reimbursement/index.htm

Sexual health

The Department of Health will publish a full response later in the year to a health select committee report on sexual health.

The department's sexual health and HIV

strategy was launched at the end of last year and is still in the early stages of implementation.

It can be seen at www.doh.gov.uk/sexualhealthandhiv/index.htm

Older people's services

A newsletter from the national director for older people's services Ian Philp is now available at www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/olderpeople/news.htm

The current edition, aimed at older people's champions, looks at the Shaping our Future conference, the national service framework progress report and good practice around falls.

For further information contact: Bonnie.Yandall@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Thrombolysis targets

A review of the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease thrombolysis targets has been published. The document:

- confirms the importance of early thrombolysis
- outlines the success of the NHS in delivering faster treatment
- provides a checklist of good practice developed by the CHD Collaborative
- emphasises the need for NHS ambulance services and acute hospitals to work even more closely to secure better and faster care for heart attack patients. More at www.doh.gov.uk/heart/thrombolysis/review/

Smoke less

Smoking cessation services celebrated further successes when the latest figures showed 79,600 people successfully quit between April and December 2002.

Roughly three out of four smokers were treated exclusively with nicotine replacement therapy. Full report at www.doh.gov.uk/publicstats1.htm

Mental health consultation

A consultation to help drive forward initiatives to tackle social exclusion of people with mental health problems ends on 5 September. The consultation paper is at www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/mental_health/mental_health.htm

NHS and Primary Care Magazine

The magazines aim to spread good practice, stimulate debate and keep health professionals working in the NHS up to date with the latest developments. They can be read at www.nhs.uk/nhsmagazine and [www.nhs.uk.nhsmagazine/primarycare/index.asp](http://www.nhs.uk/orwww.nhs.uk.nhsmagazine/primarycare/index.asp)

Parliamentary questions

The following are recent parliamentary questions relating to allied health professions:

Physiotherapy, 28 April, visit www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/cm030428/text/30428w78.htm#30428w78.html_sbhd7

Dysphasia Funding, 16 May, visit www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/cm030516/text/30516w12.htm#30516w12.html_sbhd9

For more information on other questions visit www.parliament.uk/hansard/hansard.cfm Click on advanced search and enter the subject area or date the question was heard.