

***Policy News – Edition 7***  
***27<sup>th</sup> October 2006***

**1. The annual Health Check for NHS bodies**

The Healthcare Commission has published two key documents regarding the Performance Assessment Framework for NHS bodies. They are: Results of the annual health check in 2005/2006, published on 12 October 2006- which gives the performance rating for all NHS bodies based on the system of self-assessment or "health check" that replaces the star ratings system; The annual health check in 2006/2007: Assessing and rating the NHS, which provides guidance on how the health check process will be changing in 2006/2007 and beyond.

<http://annualhealthcheckratings.healthcarecommission.org.uk/annualhealthcheckratings.cfm>

**2. Time to Care? An overview of home care services for older people in England 2006**

This report produced by Commission for Social Care Inspection describes the current state of home care in England. Drawing on the views of older people, evidence from the regulation and inspection of services, and from councils' performance assessment, it suggests how local authorities can shape the future of home care.

[http://www.csci.org.uk/about\\_csci/news/re-think\\_home\\_care\\_services\\_s.aspx](http://www.csci.org.uk/about_csci/news/re-think_home_care_services_s.aspx)

**3. Health Care Commission findings on community mental health services**

The Health Care Commission has produced two reports- the Survey of Users of Community Mental Health Services and the National Review of Community Mental Health Services. The findings of both reports show that, while the community mental health service users report improvements in the way they are treated by NHS and other staff, some aspects of community mental health services are still in need of improvement.

<http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/serviceproviderinformation/reviewsandinspections/improvementreviews/adultcommunitymentalhealthservices.cfm>

**4. Reconfiguring Urgent Care: Government discussion document**

The Department of Health has launched a discussion document on the future of urgent care. It argues that as health services are set to become more community-based, a system-wide review of urgent care is needed. The discussion will embrace the role of out-of-hour services, ambulances, large hospitals and community-based facilities. Responses are requested by 5 January 2007.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/LiveConsultations/LiveConsultationsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4139428&chk=SvcEBc](http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/LiveConsultations/LiveConsultationsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4139428&chk=SvcEBc)

**5. Strong and prosperous communities: An Overview of the Local Government White Paper**

The attached document provides a summary of the Local Government White Paper produced last week. Proposals are made by the government on neighbourhoods, changes to Council constitutions, the development of Local Strategic Partnerships, performance and efficiency.

[http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/100/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperSummary\\_id1504100.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/100/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperSummary_id1504100.pdf)

## **6. Successfully SmokeFree - National SmokeFree Conference, 23/24 Nov 06, Liverpool**

This conference will bring together all those who will contribute to the partnership delivery of a successfully smokefree England. Caroline Flint, Public Health Minister will launch the Government's Smokefree Implementation Strategy, to mobilise and inspire local partnerships to secure effective compliance building for the introduction of this legislation in summer 2007 and deliver support to every smoker wishing to use this opportunity to quit.

Places can be booked online at [www.smokefreeconference.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeconference.co.uk)  
Immediate booking is advised.

*Forwarded by Andrea Duggan, Heart of Mersey.*

## **7. Online mapping project shows "iron chain" between smoking and deprivation**

A major new mapping project which shows smoking rates and deprivation in every ward in England has been published online by Action on Smoking and Health. The project, intended for use by policy makers, health professionals and media, clearly shows the "iron chain" that links smoking and deprivation. Smoking remains the single biggest factor behind the difference in life expectancy between social classes in England.

The maps, produced for ASH by cartographers Lovell Johns, are available online at: <http://www.ash.org.uk/html/mappingproject/mappingproject.html> and can be searched by region and district, or by entering a specific postcode.

*Forwarded by Alex Scott-Samuel, senior lecturer, University of Liverpool*

## **8. Teenage Pregnancy Accelerating the Strategy to 2010**

The Government has published, Teenage Pregnancy: Accelerating the Strategy to 2010, which builds on the guidance issued by the DfES in July 2006, Teenage Pregnancy Next Steps. The strategy sets out a wider approach aiming to address the underlying causes of teenage pregnancy as well as identifying the action that will be taken to intervene in poorly performing areas. This is a copy of a policy briefing written by CSN and issued to that network last week.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/ig00156/>

## **9. The growing trends in maternal obesity**

Problems relating to obesity and women's health have been recognised for many years, but the extent of these problems and the mechanisms by which they occur have been unclear. How does obesity affect reproductive health and fertility? International research was initiated to answer these questions and investigate the impact and consequences of obesity on women's health. This month's edition of BJOG journal (an international journal of obstetrics and gynaecology), produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, documents a number of these articles and is devoted entirely to obesity and its effects on women, in particular to problems associated with maternal obesity.

<http://www.rcog.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=97&PressReleaseID=126>

## **10. Spearheading healthier eating**

The Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health have established a Nutrition Strategy Steering Group (NSSG), jointly chaired by FSA Chair, Deirdre Hutton and Public health Minister, Caroline Flint. Bringing together key representatives from industry, consumer and health groups, the NSSG will help drive forward health improvement through diet and nutrition policies including those set out in the Choosing Health white paper.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/oct/spearheading>

## In the news.....

**TV watershed battle.** As health campaigners furiously lobby Ofcom to force the introduction of a pre-watershed TV ban on junk food advertising, the regulator produced research that finds the public does not support such draconian measures.

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/health/news/0,,1891306,00.html>

**Big Salt.** We've all been told to be dubious of studies paid for by Big Tobacco. Lately, we've learned it's hard to find an expert on depression or schizophrenia who isn't getting paid by Big Pharma. And now, we have Big Salt.

[http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thecheckout/2006/10/the\\_salt\\_conspiracy.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thecheckout/2006/10/the_salt_conspiracy.html)

**Drink drug.** Alcohol is a drug in socially acceptable form, and getting government and the media to face the problems it causes is a challenge, says Victor Adebowale of Turning Point.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,8164-2394675,00.html>

**The Guardian.** Health inspectors demanded urgent action last night to remedy failings at 50 NHS trusts across England that scored the worst marks in a new tougher system of measuring the quality of patient care.

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/health/news/0,,1920171,00.html>

**Medical News Today.** NHS foundation trusts have performed significantly better than non-foundation trusts in the Healthcare Commission's first annual health check.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=53930>

**The Times.** The assessments of NHS performance published by the Healthcare Commission today offer only limited help to patients.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2399748,00.html#>

**Sharp rise in tuberculosis cases** - Cases of tuberculosis (TB) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland rose by 10.8% in 2005, figures show.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6109228.stm>

**Hewitt asks for alcohol tax rise** - Tax on alcohol should rise to reduce binge drinking among teenagers, Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt has said.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6089784.stm>

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