

POLICY BRIEF

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

24 November 2021



The information within this Brief is correct at the time of approval for publication and contains relevant recent announcements made by Government and its departments and regulators.

GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

Department of Health and Social Care (03/11/2021) [Adult social care: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) winter plan 2021 to 2022](#). This plan sets out the key elements of national support available for the social care sector during winter 2021 to 2022 and principal actions that local authorities, NHS organisations and social care providers across all settings (including those in the voluntary and community sector) in England should take this winter.

Department of Health and Social Care (03/11/2021) [Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for adult social care](#). The Adult Social Care winter plan includes a commitment to providing workforce recruitment and retention funding to support local authorities and providers to recruit and retain sufficient staff over winter, and support growth and sustain existing workforce capacity. This guidance provides more information on the £162.5 million Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund.

The main purpose of the fund is to support local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity this winter, in order to:

- support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care
- support timely and safe discharge from hospital to where ongoing care and support is needed
- support providers to prevent admission to hospital
- enable timely new care provision in the community
- support and boost retention of staff within social care

Department of Health and Social Care (05/11/2021) [£3 million more to reduce brain injuries at birth](#). Minister for Patient Safety Maria Caulfield has announced £3 million for the second phase of a programme to improve maternity safety.

Department of Health and Social Care (29/10/2021) [Guidance updated to allow flexibility in booster programme for most vulnerable](#). Clinical guidance has been updated to allow COVID-19 boosters to be given earlier to those at highest risk where this makes operational sense, such as care home residents.

Department of Health and Social Care (29/10/2021) [More support for women experiencing the menopause](#). Government action to cut the cost of repeatable HRT prescriptions and a new Menopause Taskforce means women experiencing the menopause will be better supported. The new cross-government Menopause Taskforce will be co-chaired by the Minister for Women's Health and Carolyn Harris MP. The taskforce will consider the role education and training, workplace policies and peer groups for menopausal women can play in supporting women through what can be a mentally and physically challenging time.

Care Quality Commission (22/10/2021) [Annual assessment of health care and social care in England](#). The Care Quality Commission (CQC), an independent regulator of health and social care in England, has published their annual assessment of health care and social care in England. The State of Care report looks at trends, shares examples of good and outstanding care, and highlights where care needs to improve.

Department of Health and Social Care (14/10/2021) [Plan set out to improve access for NHS patients and support GPs](#). The NHS, working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, has published [a blueprint for improving access to GP appointments for patients](#) alongside supporting GPs and their teams. The NHS, working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, has today published a blueprint for improving access to GP appointments for patients alongside supporting GPs and their teams. The measures include a £250 million winter access fund from NHS England to help patients with urgent care needs to get seen when they need to, often on the same day if needed.

Department of Health and Social Care (05/10/2021) [New Every Mind Matters campaign to improve people's mental health](#). A new campaign has been launched to help people with their mental wellbeing. This is the first campaign delivered by the new Office for Health Improvements and Disparities which was launched on 1 October with the aim of tackling health inequalities across the country.

2021 Spending Review Headline announcements – 27 October 2021

Health and Adult Social Care

As already announced, Government plans to spend over £8 billion over the Spending Review (SR) period for a major catch up programme to help the NHS provide elective care that was delayed by the pandemic.

In September the government confirmed £5.4 billion for adult social care over the next three years through the Health and Social Care Levy. The new Health and Social Care Levy, along with an increase to the rates of dividend tax, will raise around £13 billion per year for spending on health and social care across the UK. This enables significant further funding for the NHS, for the government's reforms to social care, public health and prevention programmes, and investment in training the workforce of the future.

SR21 confirms:

- £3.6 billion will go directly to local government over the SR21 period to implement the cap on personal care costs and changes to the means test. This funding will also help local authorities better sustain their local care markets by moving towards a fairer cost of care. Further details will be set out in due course.
- £1.7 billion over three years to improve the wider social care system, including the quality and integration of care. At least £500 million of this will be allocated to improve qualifications, skills and wellbeing across the adult social care workforce.
- Additional funding through the local government settlement to ensure all local authorities can meet core pressures in adult social care.
- Government will maintain the Public Health Grant in real terms over the SR21 period, enabling local authorities to invest in prevention and frontline services like child health visits.
- £1.5 billion over the next three years for new surgical hubs, increased bed capacity and equipment to help elective services recover, including surgeries and other medical procedures.

- £2.3 billion over the next three years will transform diagnostic services with at least 100 community diagnostic centres across England - helping millions of patients access earlier diagnostic tests closer to home.
- £2.1 billion over the next three years to support innovative use of digital technology so hospitals and other care organisations are as connected and efficient as possible, freeing up valuable NHS staff time and ensuring the best care for patients wherever they are.

HASC Scrutiny updates from previous meeting

Further information was requested in the previous meeting held on 22 September 2021 in respect of the following government announcement:

Department of Health and Social Care (31/08/2021) [Veterans' mental health services to receive £2.7 million boost](#). Armed forces veterans will benefit from extra support including extra mental health services thanks to a further £2.7 million funding. Support will be tailored to those dealing with complex mental or physical trauma or alcohol and substance misuse. The additional support will be rolled out through Op COURAGE, the Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

Update:

[Op COURAGE](#) is an NHS mental health specialist service, [launched in March 2021](#), designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families. In Plymouth this is led by an NHS Clinical Lead for the South West and an NHS Veterans Specialist Mental Health Assessment and Liaison Nurse. Together they offer:

- support with intensive emergency care and treatment if in a crisis
- help transitions from military to civilian life by providing mental health care with Defence Medical Services (DMS)
- support for armed forces families affected by mental health problems, including helping access local services
- helping recognise and treat early signs of mental health problems as well as more advanced mental health conditions and psychological trauma
- helping access other NHS mental health services if needed, such as finding an NHS psychological therapies service (IAPT) and eating disorder services
- helping get in touch with charities and local organisations who can support wider health and wellbeing needs, such as housing, relationships, finances, employment, drug and alcohol misuse and social support

In June 2021 the NHS leads for Op Courage attended the city's Armed Forces Covenant meeting to update progress of the scheme and to share some of the experiences over the last 12 months. Many local mental health providers are members of the Armed Forces Covenant and were able to engage directly with the NHS leads to discuss best practice. Funding is a key issue and whilst the government funding boost will trickle down, many local providers are reliant on grant funding to deliver services. New legislation is expected in 2022 which will place a legal duty on public sector bodies to have "Due Regard" in relation to decision-making specifically relating to Housing, Children and Health in the arena of the Armed Forces.

Op Courage is part of a [nine-point NHS plan to support the Armed Forces](#). Other commitments laid out in the plan include ensuring access to quality secondary care, reducing healthcare inequalities, helping with the transition to civilian life and increased support for families, children and carers.

OPEN CONSULTATIONS AND SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRIES

Date of publication	Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	 GOV
21 October	Public Accounts Committee: NHS Backlogs and waiting times	Accepting evidence until Wed 8 December