WELSH GOVERNMENT

Largest ever Welsh health research project launched

The largest research project of its kind, designed to better understand the health of people living in Wales, is launched in February. HealthWise Wales is a confidential research study, which aims to develop an in-depth knowledge of the health of the nation - the information gained will be used to help the NHS plan for the future. The study hopes to recruit 260,000 people aged 16 and older over a five-year period. HealthWise Wales will involve large numbers of people in Wales in health and social care research.

Health Minister unveils new “Welsh Way” of working in the NHS.

A new set of principles for all staff employed by the Welsh NHS, which form the basis of the "Welsh way" of working, has been unveiled.

They state:

- We put patients and users of our services first
- We seek to improve our care
- We focus on wellbeing and prevention
- We reflect on our experiences and learn
- We work in partnership and as a team
- We value all who work for the NHS.

Campaign encourages victims of sexual abuse to get support

A new phase of the Welsh Government’s Live Fear Free campaign aims to encourage people who have suffered sexual abuse to seek help. The campaign will focus on encouraging adults who were abused as children to call the Live Fear Free helpline. They can report the abuse, but it is also important to share the burden and receive support.

£5m for new health and social care centre in Flint

A £5m investment to develop a new integrated health and social care centre in Flint has been approved by Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford. A number of new services will also be relocated in Flint, including physiotherapy assessment, adult community mental health and a range of consultant-led clinics providing diagnosis, review and prescribing for patients who would otherwise be seen in hospital; these clinics will be supported by telemedicine technology.
Health Minister announces radical shake-up of outpatient services

The plan Securing Health and Wellbeing for Future Generations outlines work all health boards and NHS trusts will undertake over the next 12 months to transform outpatient services and reduce over-testing and over-medication in the Welsh NHS. The Prudent Prescribing Implementation Group will lead a review of the repeat prescription process to reduce unnecessary and inappropriate prescriptions.

Click here for the national actions for prudent healthcare.

Margaret Flynn to chair Wales’ new National Independent Safeguarding Board

The National Independent Safeguarding Board has been established under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It will work alongside the regional safeguarding adults boards and safeguarding children boards to secure improvements in safeguarding policy and practice throughout Wales. Dr Flynn undertook the serious case review into Winterbourne View Hospital in south Gloucestershire and was commissioned to undertake a review of the neglect of older people living in care homes in Gwent, investigated as Operation Jasmine.

The Minister has appointed five members to the board:

- Keith Towler, the former Children’s Commissioner for Wales
- Ruth Henke QC, an eminent lawyer in the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Simon Burch, a former director of social services at Monmouthshire Council
- Jan Pickles OBE, programme director at the NSPCC
- Rachel Shaw, designated nurse, safeguarding children at Public Health Wales.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Reform of Residential Care Services

The Health and Social Care Committee wrote a letter to the Minister of Health and Social Care on the need to accelerate improvements to residential care services. They call for:

- Joined up working to secure appropriate and sustainable funding for independent advocacy services across Wales;
- All mechanisms to be available – including the use of lay assessors – and be utilised to ensure that those running, regulating and inspecting residential care services have a clear understanding of daily life in a care home; and
- Welcoming the work that will be undertaken to map the existing training provision and the consideration of existing research to address variations.

The Mental Health Wales Measure

A debate was held in plenary on the Duty to Review the Mental Health Measure final report on 23 February. There were calls for more transparent and routine data in relation to waiting times for psychological interventions. The motion was agreed by the Assembly. Webcast (Item 9).

The report itself makes a number of proposals, including: expanding the list of professionals that can 1. Make primary care mental health assessment and 2. Can be Care Coordinators; developing the Care and Treatment Plan to be more
user-friendly (without the need for amending legislation); extending the rights to all people (those under 18) to part 3 of the Measure; and establishing a group to (among other things) look into the interface between primary and secondary care mental health services.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

Health Select Committee publishes RCPsych evidence on impact of spending review on health and social care

The Health Select Committee published RCPsych evidence on the impact of the spending review on health and social care. It spelt out how increased funding for mental health care will lead to fewer lives impacted by illness, fewer families existing rather than living, fewer constraints on the care provided. It highlights the big impact that cuts in public health and social care will have on mental health care.

Lords debate age of criminal responsibility

Lord Dholakia introduced a Bill to attempt to raise the age of criminal responsibility. He said that international evidence was clear that “children of 10 and 11 have less ability to think through the consequences of their actions, empathise with other people’s feelings and control impulsive behaviour”. The proposal was however rejected by the Minister Lord Faulks. He said that “The Government believe that children aged 10 and above are ... able to differentiate between bad behaviour and serious wrongdoing and should therefore be held accountable for their actions”. As a Lords Private Members Bill it therefore has no chance of passing with Government support.

Launch of the Acute Psychiatric Care Commission report

Lord Crisp held an event in Parliament to launch the Commission’s report, which proposes twelve recommendations to address the problems in England that currently mean over 500 mentally ill people have to travel over 50km to be admitted into hospital every month. These include: The introduction by October 2017 of a maximum waiting time of four hours for admission to an acute psychiatric ward for adults or acceptance for home based treatment following assessment; and phasing out nationally the practice of sending acutely ill patients long distances for non-specialist treatment by October 2017.

Parliamentary meeting on triage in mental health services

The All Party Parliamentary Group’s on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health held a joint session to hear from Dr Bob Colgate ABMU about a mental health triage system operating in South Wales. Dr Colgate described how his team ran a triage system to identify which patients needed emergency mental health referrals and which could be seen over a longer timescale. He said that in his experience it has led to significant improvements in the efficiency of the service and can also help demonstrate to commissioners the value of investing in more services. The event was attended by the Department of Health Minister Alistair Burt and the Shadow Minister for Mental Health Luciana Berger.

Government rejects Lords amendment to protect disabled people from benefits cut

MPs overruled an amendment to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill which would have prevented disabled people having their benefits cut by £30 a week. The Minister Priti Patel rejected calls from the Royal College of Psychiatrists and other members of the Disability Benefits Consortium to accept the amendment which would have stopped the benefit cut to people on the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) of Employment Support Allowance (ESA). The Bill is now going back to the Lords where Lord Low has tabled a new amendment that would hold off the cut until the Government had done a proper assessment on its impact on disabled people and whether it would make them more or less likely to enter employment.
REPORTS

The Children’s Commissioner for Wales, Beth Nesa? What Next? This report provides an overview of the information gathered during Beth Nesa? What Next?, the biggest consultation undertaken by the Children's Commissioner for Wales' office, and the Commissioner's priorities for 2016-19.

Making Sense, written by Former CAMHS users Mair Elliott, 18, and Jake Roberts, 22, The report is supported by the High Needs Collaborative (Hafal, Mental Health Foundation, Bipolar UK and Diverse Cymru) in partnership with Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People.

The Commission to review the provision of acute psychiatric care for Adults in England, Old Problems, New Solutions: Improving Acute Psychiatric Care for Adults in England.

OECD Reviews of Health Care Quality: United Kingdom 2016. It concludes that In Wales, while local autonomy and innovation is encouraged, local Health Boards (established in 2009) do not appear to have sufficient institutional and technical capacity to drive meaningful innovation and quality gains. A stronger central guiding hand is now needed to play a more prescriptive role.

EVENTS

Mental Health Today Wales tickets are available now. This year’s event takes place at the Motorpoint Arena in Cardiff on 18 May. The programme and details of who will be speaking will be announced soon. It will be a practice-focused conference, leading on latest thinking and practice in mental health from experts in the field. Book your place here for only £30

Welsh Psychiatric Society and RCPsych in Wales: Joint Meeting 6 May, the Liberty Stadium, Swansea. This year’s theme is Psychological Therapies. Book your place here.

MENTAL HEALTH BLOGS

Mental Health Cop:
"A venn Diagram of Policing, Mental Health and Criminal Justice" (proposed changes to Sections 135 and 136, The Policing and Crime Bill explained)

Krushchev’s Shoe:
Rob Poole on mental health, music and life. “Intollerance” (thoughts on personal and public criticism of Stephen Fry’s documentary – see below)

Professor Sir Simon Wessely:
"Stigmatising Attitudes towards mental Health” (of both patients and those who treat them)
WATCH AGAIN

The not so secret life of the manic depressive: 10 years on.

A decade on from when Stephen Fry spoke about manic depression in his award-winning series, this film returns to the subject to understand where he and others with bipolar are now.

My Baby, Psychosis and Me:

A documentary revealing the rollercoaster journey of two mums for whom childbirth triggers postpartum psychosis, one of the most severe forms of mental illness.

Life After Suicide:

A documentary where Angela Samata explores why some people take their own life

HAVE YOUR SAY

RCPCH outcome measures for child acute paediatric services for consultation.

The measures fall within 5 domains:

1. Overall acute healthcare utilisation
2. Acute healthcare utilisation for long term conditions, including mental health conditions
3. Safety
4. Process markers of care quality proven to have impact of outcomes
5. Measures of acute healthcare access & experience

The outcome measures would cover all four jurisdictions.

Deadline: 16 March, 2016

Welsh Government: Consultation on Together for Mental Health – Delivery Plan 2016 – 2019

The ten year strategy for improving the nation’s mental health and treatment of care sees the second of three plans supporting the strategy.

Deadline: 4 April, 2016

Consultation on the refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan.

Identified priorities and proposed actions include:

- raising awareness, information, advice and training
- assessment, diagnosis and support
- addressing support needs
- education and employment.

Deadline: 27 May, 2016
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