Dear Reader,

At the meeting of our editorial board we decided that the only thing we wanted to say in this, our last issue of 2011, is have a very happy and trouble-free Christmas and a very successful 2012.

This of course we do; however, a reader drew attention to some editorial comment which I had made about the Southern Cross collapse being one-of-a-kind. So, to give the counter view the rest of the editorial is given over to those views, because there is great force in what is said!

"Whilst I entirely agree with your point that SX was a one-off model which (as some of us predicted) was doomed to ultimate failure, I am less convinced that it couldn't happen again. My concern is over the financial health of some of the operators who have taken over the SX leases. Companies who don't enjoy the best of accounts (at least one has just emerged from a CVA) are now running tired homes, which require significant capital investment, whilst bearing the same rental burden as their predecessors. How will that work?

The SX landlords must think they've escaped with their rental income maintained, but surely they must question how the unsustainable has just become sustainable! Fees ain't going up ant time soon, occupancy is fairly static, costs are rising and the rents are still upward only and linked to RPI.

I may be missing something but what's different?

Word on the streets is that these operators have sought to improve their short term fortunes by effectively adding cheap income but one can't see any reason for improvement in the next few years.

Rather than pick on the likes of Four Seasons and Barchester just because they're big, Margaret Hodge and Paul Burstow might want to keep an eye on the 'sons-of-SX' before they pat themselves too firmly on the back!"

Convinced of the continued risk?
If you currently get this Brunswicks' Healthcare Review from someone else and would prefer to get your own copy, sent directly at no cost - please email us with a request. Our contact details are on the last page of this issue. Thank you.
Abuse/Dignity

1. Antisocial villains no longer face threat of criminal record under watered-down ASBOs
13 December 2011 - The Times
Vandals, drunks and bullies will no longer face acquiring a criminal record if they breach a magistrates order issued under antisocial legislation.

Ed. I wonder if Government now realises that if you give half the population criminal records and the other half refuses to subject itself to the CRB regime that it will have nowhere from which to draw workers in the care sector?

2. Update on No Secrets
14 December 2011 - Action on Elder Abuse
“The No Secrets work has gone very quiet over the last 18 months, but there has been some useful activity going on behind the scenes. And two long awaited documents have now been published, hosted on the SCIE website but written by others for the No Secrets DH Board.

The first is an excellent guide to the law, written by Michael Mandelstam. We commend this as a useful 'bible' for anyone interested in considering legal action in response to abuse. You can download a copy directly from AEA here http://www.elderabuse.org.uk/AEA%20Services/Useful%20downloads/SCIE/Financial%20Abuse%20-%20police.pdf or go to the SCIE website to obtain it.

Both these documents are long overdue for publication, but nevertheless have been worth awaiting.”

Ed. I am a director and trustee of Action on Elder Abuse.

3. Protecting adults at risk from financial abuse
15 December 2011 - SCIE
SCIE has published an assessment commissioned by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) highlighting the current and potential future threats to vulnerable adults in relation to economic crime. It covers a wide spectrum of potential financial abuse and exploitation by family members, care workers and others. Read Assessment: Financial crime against vulnerable adults on our website

4. Safeguarding adults: new guidance on the law
15 December 2011 - SCIE
Safeguarding adults at risk of harm: A legal guide for practitioners was commissioned by the Department of Health in response to requests from practitioners for a comprehensive guide to the legal framework underpinning adult safeguarding work. It aims to equip practitioners with information about how to assist and safeguard people. Knowing about the legal basis is fundamental because the law defines the extent and limits of what can be done to help people and to enable people to keep themselves safe. Read Safeguarding adults at risk of harm: A legal guide for practitioners on our website

Business News

5. Southern Cross care home collapse could happen again
06 December 2011 - Mature Times By Claire Hayhurst
The Government needs to take action to prevent a repeat of the Southern Cross care home crisis, according to a powerful group of MPs.

They are also unaware whether any are on the brink of collapse as there are currently no early warning systems, the MPs warned.

Margaret Hodge, the Labour MP who chairs the committee cited the Four Seasons Health Care, which took over several former Southern Cross Homes, as a potential risk.

She said the company had almost #1 billion of debt - but it claims to be in good health and unlike the firm which collapsed earlier this year.

"The Department of Health must get to grip with the very real risks to the social care market, if we are to avoid another Southern Cross," she said.

"No one, government or local authorities, really knows what is going on locally or whether one provider is becoming too dominant.

"Local authority budgets are shrinking and large-scale
providers are racking up debt - Four Seasons Health Care, for instance, carries nearly £1 billion of debt - yet the Department is not monitoring their financial health.

"There is currently no early warning system for providers getting into difficulty.

"It is deeply worrying that the Department has not made clear what will happen when providers fail.

"This is crucial to protect frail and vulnerable users of care and to provide reassurance that the responsibilities of the failed providers will be transferred quickly and with minimum disruption to users."

Currently, the Department of Health sets the policy framework for care but local councils fund many of the services.

Smaller care home owners have recently been swallowed up by large companies, which have run into trouble due to councils freezing their fees and funding less residents.

Southern Cross had become Britain’s biggest care home operator with 750 homes but collapsed over the summer due to a drop in income and a £250 million rental bill.

The committee claim the Department of Health was "concerned" about Southern Cross’ business model as far back as 2007 but was "unaware of the true state" of problems.

They say government officials only look at the national picture and do not assess how much local or regional areas are dominated by one care home provider.

There is also no early warning system for companies at risk, or a failure regime for those that have gone under.

Liz Kendall, Labour’s Shadow Care and Older People Minister, said: "The Government is dangerously complacent about what is really happening in social care.

"They have done nothing to prevent another Southern Cross from happening again.

"Four Seasons, which has taken over more than a hundred Southern Cross homes, is seeking to restructure its finance but we have no idea how this is progressing, or whether it is possible."

But Four Seasons, majority owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland, claims it is "very different" to Southern Cross as it is more profitable.

It said it has inherited debts from previous private-equity owners and has reduced them to about £750 million.

The company claims to be worth more than £950 million - more than its debts - and making a "modest profit" running 500 facilities, with a capacity of 24,400 beds.

A spokesman said: "It should be remembered that the Southern Cross situation was a private sector problem that has been resolved by the private sector.

"Despite all the gloomy predictions there was not the scenario of elderly residents being made homeless or having to move to other homes; there were not mass redundancies among care staff; there was not a massive additional burden on local authorities."

The Care Services Minister, Paul Burstow, added: "We want to make sure that there are sufficient safeguards in place to oversee care providers to protect people who rely on these essential services.

"In October we set out a range of possible approaches to market oversight. The feedback we are receiving, including the PAC report, will inform the Government’s White Paper, which will be published next spring."

6. Health woes fail to dampen private equity interest
12 Dec 2011 efinancialnews
Buyout firm Carlyle Group has taken a stake in Swiss-German hospital and nursing services group Ameos, undeterred by the furore over private equity involvement in the care home sector after problems at UK company Southern Cross.

7. Private sector faces referral to Competition Commission
13 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
Without last week’s decision to refer the private healthcare market to the Competition Commission, the boss of Circle has told HSJ that the NHS reforms would have "blown up in people’s faces".

8. Corporate update and completion of homes transfer
14 December 2011 - Southern Cross Healthcare Group
Southern Cross announced that, following receipt of regulatory approvals and finalising of formalities, the last two homes operated by the Company (both in Scotland) were transferred to new operators.

This concluded the hand over process announced by the Company in its statement of 27.09.2011 and Southern Cross has now ceased to be an operator of
care homes. This exercise, the largest transfer undertaken in the care sector, has been achieved while at the same time providing continuity of care for the residents in homes it previously operated.

The Board expresses, on behalf of all stakeholders, its appreciation for the efforts of the former management and staff of the Company, the vast majority of whom have transferred to new operators, for the integrity and determination they showed in making sure this transfer completed. The forbearance and understanding of the Company’s Landlords and Lenders has also been remarkable.

Stephen Taylor, Chairman of Southern Cross, said:

“The smooth transfer of the operations has been achieved by close coordinated effort of Southern Cross staff, Commissioners, landlords and new operators with additional key support from many other parties. Continuity of care and minimising concern for residents has been the priority of the whole team and I am grateful for the part that everyone has played.”

Last homes go at Southern Cross
15 December 2011 - Daily Mail
Item citing above press release – item 8.

15 December 2011 - EHealth Insider
If part of your business involves selling into the NHS IT Market next year you would be well advised to order the EHI Intelligence Market Forecast Report for 2012, a comprehensive and detailed 60 page document providing in-depth analysis of the main trends shaping the NHS IT market, focusing on acute and mental health trusts. A free report summary is available here.

The report, which comes as part of an EHI Intelligence annual subscription package, is also available to order as a stand-alone report. If you would like download an order form to purchase the report, please click here.

10. MBO gives a lift to Assura
16th December 2011
Healthcare property services specialist Assura sold part of its business to a management team backed by financier Richard Hughes for an undisclosed sum.

Assura LIFT Holdings, based in Colmore Row, Birmingham, caters for local improvement finance trust (LIFT) projects.

Warrington-based Assura Group, has retained a 15% stake in the company and additional funding for the management buyout includes a significant personal investment by Hughes, managing director of Manchester-based Zeus Capital.

The structure of the deal, led by managing director Elaine Siew and development director David Acklam, comprises 100% of the operational and consultancy businesses, together with 25% of the investments. Assura currently manages a property portfolio - valued at £214m - across five LIFT companies, as well as managing seven further buildings in construction worth £54m.

By the end of the year 2012 it is estimated that the combined total of the portfolios will reach £300m. Siew - a former corporate finance partner at what was then Robson Rhodes - said: “Assura LIFT has developed into the substantial business that it is today through the ongoing support of the Assura Group and we will continue to work closely with them during the next phase of our development.

“Whilst continuing to concentrate on the LIFT end of our business, we are looking to expand our property development and consulting activities, focusing on the public sector and the opportunities that will continue to emerge from estate rationalisation.”

Care Homes

11. Surrey care home told to improve after critical report
12 December 2011 – BBC News
The CQC has told Melbreck Nursing Home in Tilford to take “urgent” and “immediate” action after a visit in September.

Managers were told they had failed to meet nine essential standards which included the care and welfare of people, safeguarding people from abuse and the management of medicines.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-16139733

12. Six women killed in France care home fire
14 December 2011 – BBC News
A fire, accidentally started, at a retirement home in the French city of Marseille has left 6 women dead and 13 other people injured.

Officials said that the fire was started by a 75-year-old man who had tried to open a packet of sweets with a cigarette lighter in his third-floor room.

The flames spread quickly and the six victims, although not close to his room, were unable to move.

The French city of Marseille has left 6 women dead and 13 other people injured.

13. High Court backs Pembrokeshire care homes over fees
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Pembrokeshire council was ordered by the High Court to reconsider how much it pays private care
homes for each resident for a second time after seven care home companies took further legal action against the local authority.

After a court hearing last year the council offered to increase payments for each resident from £390 to £464 per week but care homes argued that the money was not enough to cover their costs. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-16220178

14. Longue Rue House care home is closed over sickness
17 December 2011 – BBC News
A Guernsey residential home has been closed to visitors following an outbreak of sickness.

Longue Rue House was closed after several residents started suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea with residents being advised to remain within the home and not to visit family members or attend community events. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-16232041

Case Reports

Law Reports

15. R (on the application of Mavalon Care Limited and others) v Pembrokeshire County Council
In this case before the Administrative Court, Wales care home operators argued, for the second time, that the council had gone awry in setting the ‘usual cost’ it would pay for care. On this occasion whilst PCC had accepted the Laing & Buisson model for calculating what it would pay the council cut the return on capital from 12% to 6% a reduction of £52 per week, per service user. The fee as set was some 19% greater than previously paid. Nevertheless, the court found that the departure was without merit and without justification and directed the council to re-determine the rate correctly.

Ed. As a ratepayer I would be blazing mad with the council if I lived in Pembrokeshire. After the previous hearing in 2010 there was a political ‘punch-up’ over the waste of money, estimated at the time to be £250,000 on a case which the council had been assuring elected members that it would win. This must now be a matter for a number of highly placed people to consider their respective positions and to resign.

Disciplinary cases

16. Slap claim Cruden Bay care home nurse to face hearing
12 December 2011 – BBC News
Badarmaine Garnett, a nurse accused of slapping a resident at an Aberdeen care home is to face a hearing.

She faces charges relating to Sunnybank home in Cruden Bay in 2006 including claims Ms Garnett allowed another resident to inappropriately touch her.

Ms Garnett will face a conduct and competence committee hearing in January. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-16139348

17. Care worker Kimberley Walker jailed for abusing women
12 December 2011 – BBC News
Kimberley Walker, the care worker who abused two elderly women at Amathea care home in Wokington has been given a 12 month prison sentence.

She held a blanket over the head of one woman and a pillow over the face of another at the Cumbrian care home in December 2010.

She had denied two charges of ill treatment but was convicted last month. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-16137039

18. Social worker struck off for misconduct in healthcare job
14 December 2011 – Community Care
A social worker has been struck off after administering an antipsychotic drug to the wrong patient in his previous job as a healthcare assistant.

The allegations against Stephen Swift predated his registration as a social worker with the General Social Care Council (GSCC). http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/14/12/2011/117882/social-worker-struck-off-for-misconduct-in-healthcare-job.htm

19. Biomedical scientist suspended following conviction
14 December 2011 - HPC
Biomedical scientist Tariq R Azam has been suspended from the HPC Register following a conviction of destroying or damaging property at South West Surrey Magistrates’ Court.

A panel of the HPC Conduct and Competence Committee heard how Tariq R Azam was involved in an altercation with a taxi driver. It had apparently been agreed that the taxi driver would take Tariq Azam home via Tesco’s and a price was apparently agreed which included the shopping trip. However the Panel heard that when Tariq R Azam had finished his shopping, the taxi driver had reset the meter.

The Panel further heard that an argument followed, Tariq R Azam lashed out at the car, as it attempted to drive away, causing damage, and tried to pull the driver from his seat to detain him until police arrived.
The panel decided the most appropriate action was to suspend Tariq Azam from the Register for a period of 12 months with an Interim Suspension Order in place to cover the appeal period.

Tariq Azam was not present, nor represented at the hearing.

20. Physiotherapist suspended for lack of competence
14 December 2011 - HPC
Gokulan Vijayaraghavan has been suspended from the HPC Register for failing to perform at the competencies of a Band 6 Physiotherapist in the areas of documentation, communication, clinical practice and caseload management whilst working at Solent Healthcare NHS Trust.

A panel of the HPC Conduct and Competence Committee heard how during a routine supervised rotation it came to light that Gokulan Vijayaraghavan had seen and treated several patients for whom there was no record of his intervention / treatment on the computer system. The Panel found this to be significant as other clinicians rely on these electronic records when assessing and treating patients.

The Panel further heard that some patients found it difficult to understand what Gokulan Vijayaraghavan expected of them and the direction of treatment. Gokulan Vijayaraghavan could be too vague and lacked an ability to be clear with his patients.

The Panel also noted with concern that Gokulan Vijayaraghavan failed to discharge patients from his list appropriately which resulted in his case load becoming unnecessarily large.

The panel decided the most appropriate action was to suspend Gokulan Vijayaraghavan from the Register for a period of 12 months with an Interim Suspension Order in place to cover the appeal period.

Gokulan Vijayaraghavan was not present, nor represented at the hearing.

Cases in the news
21. £117,000 refunded by NHS after family wrongly made to pay for care
Mrs McConnell, a former nurse aged 80, was hospitalised in Wigan after a severe stroke in 2002. She was referred to Leigh for six months' rehab. The family was told that as Mrs Mc needed 24 hr nursing care she could not return home. She later lived in two nursing homes in Merseyside until she died in November 2011.

Initially the family was told that Mrs Mc would have to pay for her own care as her assets were above the DH set limits for social care. Mrs Mc's son asked for an assessment of her needs before discharge from hospital in 2003 but the NHS asserted that she was ineligible as she was stable and 'not complex'. He unsuccessfully appealed.

The family fought the NHS for eight years as they believed care should be provided by the NHS under the provisions of continuing health care (CHC).

It must have been clear to the NHS that Mrs Mc qualified for CHC because as a result of the stroke she was immobile, incontinent, unable to swallow, unable to communicate, was totally reliant on carers and she was PEG fed.

The family, I am pleased to report succeeded, but, sadly, only after Mrs Mc's death.

22. Ten in court over Winterbourne View care home inquiry
15 December 2011 - BBC News
Ten people have appeared before North Avon magistrates and face charges under the Mental Capacity Act in connection with ill treatment and neglect of four patients at Winterbourne View, Bristol.

No pleas were entered and the accused were granted bail. They will appear at Bristol Crown Court on 09.02.2012.

Those accused are: Sooaklingum Appoo, 58, of Downend; Daniel Brake, 27, of Downend; Charlotte Justine Cotterell, 21, from Yate; Alison Dove, 24, of Kingswood; Graham Doyle, 25, of Patchway; Holly Laura Draper, 23, of Mangotsfield; Wayne Stuart Rogers, 31, of Kingswood; all South Gloucestershire and Michael Onyema Ezenagu, 28, of White City, London, Kelvin Fore, 33, from Middlesbrough; and Jason Gardiner, 44, of Hartcliffe, south Bristol.

Three other men aged 25, 27 and 41, who were also arrested on suspicion of causing ill treatment under the Mental Capacity Act, remain on police bail, pending further inquiries.

23. Joshua Jones inquest: Violent boyfriend 'not checked'
15 December 2011 – BBC News
An inquest heard that a man with a history of violence was not checked by social workers investigating suspicious injuries on a Cheshire toddler.

Joshua Jones, two, from Runcorn, died in November 2007 and his mother's partner, Wayne Davenport, was convicted of his manslaughter in 2009.
24. High Court backs Pembrokeshire care homes over fees
16 December 2011 – BBC News

High Court backs Pembrokeshire care homes over fees
16 December 2011 – BBC News

Pembrokeshire council, recently ordered to look again at how much it pays private care homes says it will sound "alarm bells" across local Government.

Care home owners complained they were not receiving enough from the council for each resident they looked after and some faced going out of business, but Pembrokeshire said it already paid one of the highest weekly rates in Wales.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-16221411
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-16220178

25. Milton Keynes Hospital sorry for death of Harry Mould
16 December 2011 – BBC News

Neglect at Milton Keynes Hospital led to death of boy, five
16 December 2011 – BBC News

Milton Keynes Hospital's medical director, Martin Wetherill, has apologised to the parents of Harry Mould after a coroner ruled that "gross failures" had contributed to his death.

Five-year-old Harry was admitted to the hospital after an asthma attack in March 2009 and was transferred to Leicester Royal Infirmary the next day, and died there four days later.

Deputy Leicester coroner Donald Coutts-Wood said Harry had died of natural causes, contributed to by neglect.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16227441
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-16189673

26. £4.5 million for consultant who was bullied after taking maternity leave
17 December 2011 - The Times

Eva Michalak, 53, was appointed consultant general surgeon, Pontefract General Infirmary, in 2002 and a year later left to have a baby she was awarded the highest ever payment in a public sector case.

The size of this one award will cause the Mid Yorkshire Hospital NHS Trust profound financial difficulties.

Ed. Another example of the poor behavior of some NHS Trusts which seem unable to properly deal with staff issues.

27. Church abuse victims win payouts
17 December 2011 - The Times

The Roman Catholic Church in Holland has agreed to pay damages to tens of thousands of sexual abuse victims. An inquiry found that the Church failed to help victims or take action against those responsible even though it knew abuse was taking place. Over 100 of the 800 identified abusers are still alive. Payments will be between €5,000 and €100,000.

Children

28. Benedictine head offers resignation from inquiry into sex abuse of pupils
14 December 2011 - The Times

Fr Richard Yeo, president of the English Benedictine Congregation, has offered to resign from a Vatican-ordered investigation into sex abuse by clerics at Ealing Abbey, West London and St Benedict's independent school. The offer came after a meeting with jurist Lord Carlile who investigated the school and reported recently.

29. The truth about adoption
14 December 2011 - BBC TV

Adoption is now high on the political agenda as the best option for the 65,000 children in care. But, with less than 5% actually placed for adoption, children must wait an average two years and seven months for a permanent family. Why does it take so long? What is the human cost?

This Panorama Special follows six children in Coventry waiting to be adopted over six months. Some have waited five years. Others were returned after almost three years with prospective adopters. One child, then aged 18 months, was returned after just two weeks. This film addresses the hidden cost of adoption breakdown. In all cases, the children's pain and longing is tangible.

30. Surrey County Council criticised over child care
14 December 2011 – BBC News

Surrey County Council was criticised for its poor record of treating children in care.

It came to light after the release of statistics by the Department for Education.

Ofsted had previously criticised Surrey's children's services.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-16189673

31. Joshua Jones inquest: Coroner criticises agencies
14 December 2011 – BBC News

A coroner has accused doctors, police and social workers of "walking away" from an inquiry into the care of a toddler killed by his mother's partner.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-16189673
Joshua Jones, 2-years-old, from Runcorn in Cheshire, died on 06.11.2007.

The inquest heard Joshua was taken to Warrington General Hospital on 26.11.2007, by his mother and grandmother with a broken arm and a "constellation of other injuries", including numerous "fingerprint type" bruises.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-16189411

32. Pair charged with murder over Birmingham boy's death

14 December 2011 – BBC News

A man and a woman from Birmingham were charged with the murder of a two-year-old boy and remanded into custody

Police said the charges were in relation to the death of Keanu Williams, of Ward End, Birmingham, who died in hospital on 01.01.2011.

Both are also charged with causing or allowing the death of a child.

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board announced a serious case review in January into the death of Keanu, who was also known as Kiwi.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-16186236

33. Call for Emerging Practice Examples: Young People’s Services

15 December 2011 - SCIE

C4EO has been commissioned by the Children’s Improvement Board (CIB) to identify innovative examples of emerging local practice in relation to youth services, to share with the sector. The CIB wishes to identify best practice in relation to the systematic sharing of thinking and experience with others. It is particularly keen to identify good work being led, supported or commissioned by Local Authorities.

For more information and how to submit visit the C4EO website

34. Calls for evidence: Acute paediatric and local authority child protection services: effective liaison in cases of suspected child maltreatment - UK-wide call for practice

15 December 2011 - SCIE

SCIE is calling for examples of practice that support effective liaison between acute paediatric services, suspecting child maltreatment, and social work child protection services. We are interested in circumstances when children and young people present initially at Accident & Emergency departments, as well as circumstances where there are pre-birth concerns identified within Maternity Services. In particular, we are looking for examples of useful learning in relation to staffing arrangements, information sharing and access to advice.

Closing date: 23.01.2012 (17:00hrs)

View further details on the call for practice and submit examples online

35. Government rejects Munro early intervention duty

15 December 2011 – Community Care

The Government has refused to instigate a key recommendation in the Munro Review of child protection to create an early intervention duty on councils.

Children’s Minister, Tim Loughton, said to Parliament this week that after consulting with directors of children’s services, police, health and education “we have concluded we do not need a new statutory duty to deliver early help and that there is sufficient existing legislation to realise Professor Munro’s recommendation”.

http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/15/12/2011/117888/Government-rejects-Munro-early-intervention-duty.htm

36. Surge in would-be adopters after children’s plight is shown on TV

16 December 2011 - The Times

After a special edition of Panorama made by documentary film veterans including Roger Graef. The film portrays six adoptions including several that broke down with devastating effects for the children.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b019307z/Panorama_The_Truth_About_Adoption/

Conferences & Courses

To follow next week

Consultations

37. HPC launches consultation on the registration renewal date for social workers in England

Consultation opens 07 December 2011

Consultation closes 29 February 2012

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has launched a consultation to invite stakeholders for their views on setting the registration cycle for social workers in England. This is part of our preparatory work before opening the Register for the profession and is a statutory requirement in accordance with its Rules.

The Health and Social Care Bill, currently before Parliament, provides for the transfer of the regulation of social workers in England from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the Health Professions Council (HPC). Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Bill, the GSCC register for social workers in England is expected to transfer to the HPC on 31.07.2012.

Unlike the GSCC where individuals renew in three...
yearly cycles on the anniversary of their registration, each profession registered with the HPC renews its registration in two yearly cycles. This means that when a profession is due to renew its registration the HPC writes to each individual and asks them to renew their registration by the end date of the registration period for their profession.

The HPC is proposing that the registration cycle for social workers in England should end on 30 November in even numbered years.

Assuming that the GSCC register for social workers in England is transferred as planned on 31 July 2012, this would mean that social workers in England would be required to renew their registration for the first time between August 2012 and 30 November 2012 making the first registration cycle 1 December 2012 to 30 November 2014. The end date for the renewal cycle for social workers in England would then continue to be 30 November in even numbered years on an on-going basis.

HPC’s Director of Policy and Standards, Michael Guthrie, said:

“The registration cycles for each member of the professions we regulate are set out in our statutory rules and in order to set this cycle for social workers in England, the relevant dates must be added to these rules. This consultation will be of particular interest to social workers in England who will be regulated by the HPC in the future as well as interested groups and individuals. We would welcome responses to our consultation as well as comments on any related issue.”

See below link to the consultation:
http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/

38. Consultation on Employment Tribunal Fees
Consultation opens 14 December 2011
Consultation closes 06 March 2012
The Ministry of Justice has issued a consultation document on charging fees in employment tribunals (ET) and the Employment Appeal Tribunal.

For the ET two alternative options are put forward.

For the first option, the fee would depend on the nature of the claim, with three suggested levels. Level one would cover claims for unpaid wages and redundancy payments, level two would cover unfair dismissal claims and level three would be for discrimination and whistleblowing claims. Separate issue and hearing fees are proposed, with "indicative fees" of between £150-£250 for issue of a claim and £250-£1,250 for a hearing.

The second option would introduce a fourth level of fees, for claims where the claimant is seeking an award of over £30,000, and have issue fees only, ranging from £200 to £1,750.

An issue fee of £400 and hearing fee of £1,200 is proposed for the Employment Appeal Tribunal.

39. NICE: Current consultations
To browse through consultations go to http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?=consultations.current

Care Quality Commission, CSSIW, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland & Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Brunswicks LLP (@BrunswicksLLP)
12/12/2011 22:46
CQC’s CEO Cynthia Bower was due to give evidence today to the Public Accounts Committee - it was postponed until 2012. PAC says CQC not vfm (value for money)

Brunswicks LLP (@BrunswicksLLP)
13/12/2011 00:12
Dept of Health announced an investigation into CQC following claims by board member, Kay Sheldon, that it is a dysfunctional organisation

Brunswicks LLP (@BrunswicksLLP)
13/12/2011 16:23
It is 2wks since CQC said it wd respond to the outspoken evidence of K Sheldon & A Pollard. Nothing so far... Now DH says it will probe.
40. By the way...the NHS regulator has become a joke
13 December 2011 - Daily Mail
The prize for inefficiency and general uselessness goes to CQC as the item recalls the cock-ups of CQC over recent months including the tale of a private general practice which has apparently been told by CQC to close until it is inspected!

41. DH orders probe into CQC following board member's criticisms
12 December 2011 – Community Care
The DH has ordered a probe into the CQC after significant criticisms were made of its leadership from board member Kay Sheldon.

In an outspoken attack on the leadership capability of the organisation, in evidence to the Mid-Staffordshire Hospital public inquiry, Ms Sheldon called for the Chief Executive, Cynthia Bower, to resign.

http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/12/12/2011/117874/DH-orders-probe-into-CQC-following-board-member39s.htm

42. Care UK comments on proposals to get residents and relatives to help rate social care
14 December 2011 - Care UK
Care UK welcomed proposals from Paul Burstow, Minister of State for Care Services to involve care users and their relatives in rating social care services such as residential and nursing homes.

Toby Siddall from Care UK said: “There is an information vacuum that hinders people’s ability to exercise choice, in particular since the end of the CQC star ratings. We have already started talking with other providers about how the sector might take a lead to improve information. Now it looks like the Government is thinking along the same lines.”

“...I cannot think of anyone better placed to inform others facing decisions about moving into residential care or choosing a social care provider than existing users and their families and loved ones; so this has to be a step in the right direction. I look forward to learning more about the detail. The key challenge will be to ensure any guide is a comprehensive and balanced source of information.”

Care UK is a strong advocate of choice in accessing public services. Toby Siddall added: “We support any initiative that improves the ability of people and their loved ones to exercise choice and gives them the full range of options and information they need to make that choice”

The company also hopes that the new proposals will give people using social care services the opportunity to recognise tens of thousands of people working tirelessly up and down the country to deliver great quality care. Toby Siddall concluded: “We need to do more to recognise their commitment and make sure we can continue to attract more carers into a rewarding vocation.”

43. Quick guide to raising a concern about your work
14 December 2011 – CQC
CQC want to hear from you if you have a concern about something you’ve seen or experienced at your place of work. The body has published a quick guide on whistleblowing to help you decide what to do next and how you can tell them.


44. Joint inspection of services to protect children and young people in Scottish Borders council area
15 December 2011 – SCSWIS
The SCSWIS has published its joint inspection report on the protection of children and young people in the Scottish Borders council area.

The inspection included services that were provided by health agencies, the police, the local authority and Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration, as well as those provided by voluntary and independent organisations. http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8004&Itemid=363

Dementia

45. Alzheimer's Society financial abuse worry for sufferers
14 December 2011 – BBC News
Charity worried about people with dementia cheated by scams
14 December 2011 – BBC News
Con artists are 'targeting dementia sufferers'
14 December 2011 – BBC News
A new report by the Alzheimer’s Society suggests that almost one in six people with dementia in Wales have been victims of financial abuse through cold calling, mis-selling or scam mail.
The Society estimates that victims have collectively lost £5m and is calling for better protection for people with the condition.

The report, Short Changed, also examines the difficulties dementia patients and carers face managing money.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-16159839
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16174341
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16167995

46. Dementia care: Hospitals 'must make improvements'
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Burstow: NHS 'has a long way to go' on dementia
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Call for 'radical change' in dementia care
16 December 2011 – BBC News
NHS needs 'a radical shake-up' in dementia patient care
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Inadequate training blights hospital care for dementia patients
16 December 2011 – Community Care
Hospitals in England and Wales are falling short in the care given to dementia patients, a review says. A review by the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ says while services are safe, they are lacking in other areas.

The audit of 210 hospitals is the first of its kind and highlighted issues such as poor communication with families and a lack of personal care for patients.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16212696
http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9663000/9663162.stm
http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/16/12/2011/117887/hospital-dementia-care-blighted-by-inadequate-staff-training.htm

47. New ward for dementia patients in King's College Hospital
16 December 2011 – BBC News
A new hospital ward has been custom-built for dementia patients and opened in south-east London.

The ward, in King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, features colour-coded rooms to help residents work out where they are.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-16210578

Ireland, Scotland & Wales

Ireland

48. Edwin Poots considers bringing back prescription charges
12 December 2011 – BBC News
Dementia sufferers 'the typical patient'
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Inadequate training blights hospital care for dementia patients
16 December 2011 – Community Care

Northern Ireland's Health Minister, Edwin Poots, says that he is seriously considering reintroducing prescription charges to help pay for life-saving drugs.

He said that he would probably put the issue out to consultation some time in the new year and that the extra money would help fund clinically approved drugs for cancer and other debilitating diseases.

Prescription charges were originally abolished in April 2010 under the former health minister, Michael McGimpsey.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16206169
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16213459
http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9663000/9663198.stm

49. NI acute hospital numbers cut in major health review
13 December 2011 – BBC News
A major review of Northern Ireland’s health service says that the number of acute hospitals will probably have to fall from 10 to 5.

Acute hospitals are those providing A&E services and emergency surgery.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16158834

50. Poots launches £18m Telemonitoring NI service
13 December 2011 – BBC News
Northern Ireland's Health Minister, Edwin Poots, has launched a new hi-tech scheme which will enable more patients to monitor their health in their own homes.

It combines technology and services so that patients with chronic diseases can test their vital signs daily.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16133220

51. Health service treated as garage repair shop: Poots
14 December 2011 – BBC News
Health Minister, Edwin Poots, said that some people in Northern Ireland are treating the health service as a "garage repair shop."

Mr Poots told the health committee he thought that there was "enough money in the system to deal with people's needs, but not their abuse".

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16180841

52. Board defends move to track down NHS whistle-blowers
16 December 2011 – BBC News
Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Board has defended its decision to call in police and the Cabinet
55. Child Protection Written Answer
14 December 2011 — 4 Nations Child Policy Network
The Written Answer given in response to Mary Fee’s (Labour) question asking the Scottish Executive whether Scottish Prison Service staff are trained on child protection issues that might arise during prison visits and what the reasons are for its position on this matter.

John Ewing, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service, responded as follows:

“The Scottish Prison Service places great importance on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children who visit prisoners. Raising awareness of child protection issues is part of the SPS’ induction training for all new staff. Draft guidelines for staff in establishments are also in place. These are being reviewed to ensure that they reflect the Scottish Government’s National Guidance for Child Protection before being finalised.”

For the full answer to this and other questions see the Scottish Parliament Written Answer Report 14.12.2011 which is available from the Scottish Parliament website.

56. NHS funding ‘cut in real terms’ says Audit Scotland
15 December 2011 — BBC News
Audit Scotland has reported that NHS funding in Scotland is falling in real terms despite the government putting more cash into services.

Its report said the performance of the NHS was "good" but warned significant financial pressure was building.

Wales
57. NSPCC raises baby safety concerns after 71 referrals
13 December 2011 — BBC News
The NSPCC has announced that it made 71 referrals after calls from people in Wales concerned about children under the age of one.

The new figures for 2010 were released as part of the child welfare charity’s campaign, All Babies Count.

58. Council confidential data loss causes ICO concern
13 December 2011 — BBC News
The Information Commissioner’s Office says that Welsh councils are not doing enough to protect people’s confidential data from falling into the wrong hands.

8 out of Wales’ 22 councils have had cases of data being lost or stolen in the last three years.

59. NHS campaign in Wales to stop abusive patients
16 December 2011 — BBC News
A poster campaign will be launched to highlight the NHS’s zero tolerance policy for attacks on its workers, such as pharmacists, GPs and their staff in Wales.

The Welsh Government is backing the campaign, said people will “feel the full weight of the law”.

There have been almost 200 successful prosecutions
since April 2010.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-16214954

60. Older people’s commissioner: Care homes ‘not just about cost’
17 December 2011 – BBC News
The older people’s commissioner for Wales says that decisions over the funding of care homes should be based on quality and not just costs.

The decision for Pembrokeshire looks likely to have a knock-on effect for councils elsewhere in Wales.

Older people’s commissioner Ruth Marks said financial and emotional uncertainty had a huge impact on older people and their families and showed the current system was not fit for purpose.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-16230999

Learning Disabilities
Nothing to report

Legislation Update
61. The NHS Foundation Trusts (Trust Funds: Appointments of Trustees) Amendment Order 2011
13 December 2011 – OPSI

13 December 2011 – OPSI

Mental Capacity
Nothing to report

Mental Health
63. Annual mental health check call for 'stressed' MPs
15 December 2011 – BBC News
Dr Ashley Weinberg, psychologist, says heavy workloads and absence from their families may affect politicians' abilities to do their jobs. He recommends that MPs have annual mental health check-ups.

He also says David Cameron should have a regular "behind the scenes" test of his mental well-being.

But the doctor who monitors MPs says yearly checks are not necessary.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-16175506

Miscellaneous
64. Ambulance handovers
13 December 2011 – DH
The DH has responded to the BBC’s claim that ambulances are facing delays when they take patients to hospital, and that some hospitals are taking longer than 15 minutes to take charge of patients in over half of cases.

Dilnot says if coalition Govt delays reform of funding for long term care of elderly beyond Spring 2012 it will be a betrayal of public trust.

65. 15-year delay on reforms to pay for care in old age
14 December 2011 - The Times
Concern that Govt may back off from producing firm proposals for the funding of long term care which was to have been addressed in the social care White Paper due in Spring 2012.

66. Delaying care reforms is wrong says the man who planned them
15 December 2011 - Daily Mail
Economist Andrew Dilnot said that the public would feel “betrayed” and that it would be “completely unacceptable” if reforms to funding of long term care was delayed for a decade.

67. Could doctors be punished for talking about Dignitas with patients?
15 December 2011 - Daily Mail
The GMC is considering what steps might amount to assisting suicide! Would merely discussing the Swiss Dignitas organisation with a patient with a terminal illness be enough?

68. Environmental and climate change: the social care challenge
15 December 2011 - SCIE
It is hoped that a new framework can be developed for health and social care services on how to deal with the ethical issues raised by environmental and climate change. The ethics of sustainable health and social care: Towards a framework for decision-making examines the ethical challenges posed by health and social care decision-making. It also feeds back from two expert events that helped to devise and review these principles. These were jointly hosted by SCIE, the King’s Fund and The Ethox Cen-
Calculated the cost of social care
15 December 2011 - SCIE
The newly launched SCIE’s approach to economic evaluation in social care provides an introduction to economic evaluation. The report considers what economic evaluation in social care is and why it is important for policy-making. The report also explains some of the important features of social care that require a distinct approach to the application of economic evaluation methods, and what those methods should be.

Read SCIE’s approach to economic evaluation in social care on our website

Supervision in adult care research
15 December 2011 - SCIE
SCIE and the University of Sussex are conducting research into supervision in adult care settings where there are health and social care practitioners working together.

If you would like to take part email Tish Marrable or telephone 01273 678310.

Closing date: 31.12.2011

South Central Ambulance Service awarded ‘trust of the year’
15 December 2011 – BBC News
South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SCAS) was named as trust of the year on 14.12.2011.

NHS

Atlas maps out variation in NHS
12 December 2011 - DH
The Government reportedly showed its commitment to improving health outcomes for patients by shining a light on variation in NHS healthcare services.

The NHS Atlas of Variation, published by the Department of Health, highlights the amount each Primary Care Trust (PCT) spends on clinical services and links this with the health outcomes patients see. Consisting of 71 maps, the Atlas will help commissioners learn from one other, consider the appropriateness of a service, and investigate when clinical health outcomes are not reflecting the financial investment that has been made.

The first NHS Atlas of Variation, consisting of 34 maps and published in November 2010, was welcomed by the NHS and other stakeholders – over 120,000 copies have been downloaded and 10,000 hard copies requested.
While variation occurs naturally in the NHS and is encouraged where the NHS tailors services to meet local needs, we have expanded this year’s Atlas so we can support commissioners to expose unwarranted variation and help the NHS provide consistently high quality care for patients.

Examples of variations highlighted in the Atlas:

• A 25-fold variation in anti-dementia drugs prescribing rates across England
• Patients with Type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to receive the highest standard of care in some areas of England in comparison to others
• There is an eight-fold variation in the range of patients receiving angioplasty treatment for a severe (STEMI) heart attack – this variation may be due to long travel times to reach patients living in rural areas.

Health Minister Lord Howe said:

“Our modernisation plans for the NHS will result in a more patient-centred NHS that achieves health outcomes that are amongst the best in the world and gives people a greater say about their healthcare. The Atlas of Variation lets us look at how the local NHS is meeting the clinical needs of their local population. This will help commissioners to identify unjustified variations and drive up standards so patients are receiving consistently high quality care throughout the NHS.

“We are committed to improving results for patients and our new NHS Outcomes Framework will hold the NHS to account for this. Commissioners will be able to apply contractual penalties if any organisation is failing to deliver improvements for patients.”

76. Embrace NHS competition, Milburn tells Labour
12 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
Former Labour health secretary Alan Milburn has warned his successors in the party to back competition in the health service and adopt a more reformist outlook.

77. New Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust chairman chosen
12 December 2011 – BBC News
The trust's council of governors has approved the appointment of Prof John Caldwell as the new chairman to head Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Sir Stephen Moss, the current chairman will step down at the end of January. Prof Caldwell's appointment will come into effect on 01.02.2012.

78. Medics urge people to use A&E sensibly
12 December 2011 – BBC News
People will be urged to use A&E sensibly over the festive period as the NHS releases a series of videos showing inappropriate reasons for attendance.

Among examples portrayed are a request for help carving a turkey and staff being asked to remove a swear word written on someone's head.

The films can be seen on YouTube.

79. Lives at risk as hospitals run into cash crisis
13 December 2011 - The Times
No one seems to look at the people. We’re just statistics
13 December 2011 - The Times
Who will lead the capital’s health services
13 December 2011 - The Times
Front page news, according to the Kings Fund, lives are being put at risk in leading London hospitals because of inequalities in care caused by the cash crisis.

Olive, 75, and Harry Tuck, 83, work as volunteers at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich, they are two of about 1,000 volunteers speaks of the statistics.

Prof. Lord Darzi and Peter Howitt write a commentary on the crisis facing London’s NHS.

80. Real cost of IT failures in the NHS
13 December 2011 - The Times, Letters to the Editor
Keith Clough observes that health monitors could have been installed in people's homes as long ago as 2002 but that DH decreed that it should await the completion of the national NHS IT contract.

81. Patients in poorer regions using A&E over GP
13 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
Patients in the poorest areas are 63% more likely than those in the richest locations to find it hard to see a GP. They are also 53% more likely to attend accident and emergency, according to HSJ analysis of newly published figures.
82. Gas mixture 'could clean hospitals'
13 December 2011 – Age UK

Scientists have suggested that a new method of killing bacteria which mirrors the human body's defence system could be used to sterilise hospitals.

The sterilising gas is a mixture of ozone and hydrogen peroxide, and can be pumped into hospital rooms to eliminate bugs, and could help to prevent a number of hospital patients, particularly older ones, from succumbing to preventable infections.

Both ozone and hydrogen peroxide are produced by the body in small doses to form a compound that destroys bugs.

http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/gas-mixture-could-clean-hospitals/

84. Over-40s health check provision in England 'patchy'
13 December 2011 – BBC News

The NHS Health Checks says that provision of health MOTs for the over-40s in England has been "slow and patchy".

The checks, designed to spot heart disease by looking for risk factors like high cholesterol or blood pressure, should be fully rolled out across the country by 2012-2013, but Heart UK found many primary care trusts around the country were not yet geared up for the job.

Nine had failed to provide even one single check this year.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16137013

85. NHS London needs 'urgent change', says King's Fund
13 December 2011 – BBC News

The King's Fund report says that London's NHS is in "urgent need of change" but there is a risk there will be no one in charge to push that change through.

The independent think tank said there could be a "responsibility vacuum" in organising services when the strategic health authority is abolished in April 2013.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-16154806

86. Epsom father criticises NHS Surrey over son's cancer treatment
13 December 2011 – BBC News

The father of an eight-year-old boy with a rare form of cancer has criticised health chiefs for not funding treatment that is readily available abroad.

Nick Bird has helped to raise £80,000 to fund immunotherapy treatment for his son, Adam but said it was unfair that NHS Surrey refused to fund the treatment while other primary care trusts have chosen to do so.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-16157408

87. Great Western Hospital strike threat over 'bullying'
13 December 2011 – BBC News

Support workers at Swindon's Great Western Hospital will be holding a ballot for strike action over alleged managerial "bullying and harassment".

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-16157220

88. James Paget Hospital chief exec Wendy Slaney to retire
13 December 2011 – BBC News

The chief executive of under-fire James Paget Hospital says she is to retire from the NHS.

Wendy Slaney announced she was leaving her post at the James Paget Hospital (JPH) following a "real regret".

In November, the CQC gave the JPH its second formal warning over its quality of care.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-16168850

89. Leadership vacuum threatens patient care in London
13 December 2011 – The King's Fund

King's Fund report on London health trusts
13 December 2011 – DH

The King's Fund has published a report that says that health trusts in London are not implementing essential reforms to improve patient safety.

The think tank has called on the Government to spell out who will be responsible for improving Londoners' health and health care following the abolition of the strategic health authority.

90. MORE NHS FUNDING TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT
14 December 2011 - DH
£91.6 billion to go direct to frontline NHS

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley announced that the NHS will get a funding boost of over £2.5 billion to provide services for patients in 2012-13.

Next year, £91.6 billion will go direct to Primary Care Trusts – a 2.8% increase in total allocations. This investment in the NHS represents a real-terms increase in health spending and shows the Government’s determination to ensure that patients have access to high quality local NHS services – a significant step given the difficult economic climate.

The £91.6bn investment in the NHS can be broken down by:

- £87.5 billion for allocations to Primary Care Trusts to provide care for local patients. This includes £300m for re-ablement services to help give people the community care they need to become more independent after being in hospital, which is double the £150m invested in 2011/12.
- £4.1 billion will be invested in dental and eye care, pharmaceutical services and support for joint working between health and social care.

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley, said:

“"I am committed to the NHS and to services for patients. We are continuing to meet our commitment to increase the NHS budget in real terms. This will mean a £2.5bn increase next year.”

“The extra investment gives Primary Care Trusts a strong platform to sustain and improve NHS services for patients. But despite this extra spending, the NHS must still strive to get the best value out of every penny it spends to meet rising demand and continue to improve results for patients.”

“In the future, we want those closest to patients – doctors, nurses and other clinicians – to be in charge of the NHS budget to deliver care for patients. Next year, the NHS will be bringing clinical leadership to the forefront in planning services for patients.”

A table detailing all the PCT allocations can be found at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2011/12/pct-allocations

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92. Caution needed on organ donation
14 December 2011 - The Times, Letters to the Editor
Dr Rachel H Rouse, Consultant Intensivist, writes that although there are strict criteria for brain stem death, there are no such criteria for ending organ support, although there are guidelines.

93. Morecambe Bay NHS trust chair Professor Eddie Kane resigns
14 December 2011 – BBC News
The chair of the Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust has stood down from his position five months early to take up a full time position at Nottingham University.

The trust is currently being investigated over the deaths of babies at Furness General Hospital. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-16189116

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94. Statistical Press Notice – General Practice Patient Survey July to September 2011 National Results
Headline results of the survey are:

GP Services:
- Nationally performance on Primary Medical Care Services is high
- 88% of patients rate their overall experience with their GP practice as good;
- 88% of patients were eventually able to get an
appointment at their GP surgery last time they tried, although 12% of patients did have to call back nearer the time;
- 93% of patients say their appointments are convenient;
- 79% rate their experience of making an appointment as good;
- 93% of patients have confidence and trust in the last GP they saw;
- 81% are satisfied with their surgery opening hours.

Long Term Conditions
- 64% of people with a Long Term Condition feel supported to manage their care;
- 93% feel that they are confident to manage their health.

Your State of Health Today
- 59% of people with long term conditions reported some form of pain and discomfort, compared to 16% of people who do not have a long term condition;
- When asked about self-care, 13% of people with a long term condition reported some problems, compared to only 1% of people without a long term condition.

Out-of-Hours
- Overall, over two-thirds of patients describe their experience of out-of-hours GP services as good (71%), although more than one in ten rate it as poor (14%);
- Confidence and trust in out of hours clinicians is generally very high at 82%.

NHS Dental Access
- 92% of respondents were successful in getting an NHS dental appointment last time they tried;
- 83% rate their overall experience of NHS Dental Services as good.

Full release is available at [www.gp-patient.co.uk](http://www.gp-patient.co.uk)
In addition further analysis and comment on the NHS Dental Access results can be found on the DH website at [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_131777](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_131777)

Ipsos-MORI published the first wave of results for the GP Patient Survey covering July to September 2011 which they are carrying out on behalf of the Department of Health.

95. Statistical press notice: Mixed-sex accommodation breach data, November 2011
Main Points

- This notice presents data on all breaches (i.e. occurrences of unjustified mixing) of the Mixed-Sex Accommodation (MSA) guidance relating to English NHS-funded patients in hospital sleeping accommodation during November 2011. This is the twelfth month for which data on MSA breaches have been collected and published on a standardised basis.
- Providers of NHS-funded healthcare reported 933 breaches of the MSA guidance in relation to NHS patients in sleeping accommodation in England during November 2011, compared to 1,244 in October 2011.
- MSA data were submitted by 270 provider organisations for November 2011, made up of 71 (out of 71) Acute Non-Foundation Trusts, 95 (out of 95) Acute Foundation Trusts, 29 Community, PCT and Care Trust providers, 54 Mental Health providers and 21 Independent Sector providers.
- Of the 166 Acute Trusts that submitted data for November 2011, 120 (72%) reported zero sleeping breaches. All of the breaches occurred in Acute Trusts.
- An MSA breach rate is published alongside counts of breaches to enable comparison between provider organisations. This is the number of MSA breaches of sleeping accommodation per 1,000 finished consultant episodes (FCEs). The MSA breach rate for England in November 2011 is 0.6 per 1,000 FCEs, compared to 0.9 per 1,000 FCEs in October 2011.

Provider and commissioner tables can be found at: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Statistics/Performancedataandstatistics/MixedSexAccommodation/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Statistics/Performancedataandstatistics/MixedSexAccommodation/index.htm)
Hospital site-level data is available on the NHS Choices website at: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

Due to a technical problem, revised MSA breach data for September 2011 are not being published this month. Revised data for September 2011 will be published in January 2011 alongside revisions for July and August 2011.

96. Statistical press notice: NHS Referral to treatment (RTT) waiting times data, October 2011
15 December 2011 – DH
Main Points

- Data are published on consultant-led Referral to Treatment (RTT) waiting times for patients who were treated during October 2011. In total, 304,088 admitted patients and 880,926 non-
admitted patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, completed their RTT pathway during October 2011.

- At national level, 91.2% of admitted patients (measured on an adjusted basis) and 97.2% of non-admitted patients completed their RTT pathway within a maximum of 18 weeks. For patients still waiting for treatment (incomplete pathways) at the end of October 2011, 91.0% were waiting within 18 weeks.

- The 95th percentile time waited for patients completing an RTT pathway in October 2011 was 22.0 weeks for admitted patients and 16.1 weeks for non-admitted patients. (See Statistical Note number 6)

- The average (median) time waited for patients completing an RTT pathway in October 2011 was 8.4 weeks for admitted patients and 3.9 weeks for non-admitted patients.

- For patients still waiting for treatment (incomplete pathways) at the end of October 2011, the median waiting time was 5.7 weeks and the 95th percentile was 22.9 weeks.

- Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust did not submit incomplete RTT pathway data for October 2011. Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust did not submit any (admitted, non-admitted and incomplete) RTT pathway data for October 2011.

- Tables 1 and 2 show average (median) waiting times, 95th percentile waiting times and the percentage of patients whose RTT pathway was completed within 18 weeks by treatment function. Table 3 shows RTT waiting time trends from March 2007 to October 2011 for completed and incomplete pathways.

Detailed tables by provider and commissioner can be found via the following link:

97. Statistical press notice: Direct Access Audiology Referral to Treatment (RTT) waiting times data, October 2011
15 December 2011 – DH
Main Points

- Data are published on Direct Access Audiology patients whose referral to treatment (RTT) pathways were completed during October 2011 (completed pathways) and on those patients who were still waiting at the end of October 2011 (incomplete pathways).

- In total, 38,409 patients for whom English commissioners are responsible completed their Direct Access Audiology RTT pathway during October 2011. Of these, the average (median) waiting time was 4.8 weeks, the 95th percentile waiting time was 16.0 weeks and 98.9% were seen within 18 weeks.

- At the end of October 2011, 60,386 patients were awaiting Direct Access Audiology treatment. Of these, the average (median) waiting time was 3.9 weeks and the 95th percentile was 14.6 weeks.

- Table 1 shows average (median) waiting times, 95th percentile waiting times and the percentage of patients whose Direct Access Audiology RTT pathway was completed within 18 weeks by SHA. Table 2 shows Direct Access Audiology RTT waiting time trends from October 2008 to October 2011 for completed and incomplete pathways.

Detailed tables by provider and commissioner can be found via the following link:

Brunswicks LLP (@BrunswicksLLP) 15/12/2011 07:28
Public Accts Cttee says unrealistic to expect all NHS hospitals to achieve Foundation Trust status by 2014 due to financial stress suffered

98. Copper thieves halt hospital operations 15 December 2011 - Daily Mail
Llandough Hospital, Penarth, South Wales, cancelled nearly 100 operations after more than 300ft of copper cables was stolen linking the back-up generators to the hospital.

Foundation Trusts are planning to cut at least 30,500 staff over the next two years in what would be the sharpest fall in NHS workforce since modern records began.

100. NHS trust sector in England 'heading towards deficit' 15 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
Health economists made the warned that the NHS trust sector could be "heading for deficit" in 2011-12 after HSJ research revealed deepening problems among the financially weakest providers.

101. The mediocre will be the only losers if pay is reformed fairly 15 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
George Osborne has instructed the NHS pay review body to investigate the case for reforming the service’s national pay deal. The chancellor wants it to
become more “market facing in local areas”.

102. Emergency planning requires urgent attention in the Midlands and East of England
15 December 2011 - Health Service Journal
Earlier this year, HSJ tried to use the Freedom of Information Act to obtain details of exercises held in every region to test emergency planning preparations. But the request was rejected by the Department of Health in order to “safeguard national security”.

103. London hospitals deteriorating, MPs claim
15 December 2011 – BBC News
London hospitals in 'shocking state' says MPs' report
15 December 2011 – BBC News
The Public Accounts Committee has claimed half of the NHS Trusts in the capital are not viable and could be forced to close or merge.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-16209756
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-16195181

104. The King's Fund responds to the Public Accounts Committee's report on NHS hospitals achieving foundation trust status
15 December 2011 – The King's Fund
The Chief Executive of The King's Fund, Chris Ham, has responded to the Public Accounts Committee's report on achievement of foundation trust status by NHS hospital trusts:

"Today's report once again highlights the severe financial and clinical problems facing some hospitals. Our own report published earlier this week shows that these problems are particularly acute in London where much needed service changes have been delayed as a result of the government's health reforms."


15 December 2011 – DH
The findings from a survey asking patients to comment on their experience of their GP practice, and some other NHS services.

106. Nottingham hospitals 'failed' over patient records
15 December 2011 – BBC News
The CQC has revealed that Nottingham's two main hospitals have missed quality targets.

The Queen's Medical Centre had failed to meet the required standards in eight out of 10 categories and at the City Hospital, concerns were raised about the confidentiality of patient records.

The QMC was inspected in October while the City Hospital was investigated in September.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-16190922

107. Finance woe 'will prompt major NHS revamp'
15 December 2011 – BBC News
Financial difficulties will force NHS services in England to undergo major reorganisations which could hit the poorest the hardest, MPs say.

The Public Accounts Committee said that financial difficulties could force English NHS hospitals to close services or merge whole units.

The MPs said the difficulties were linked to historic debt, bad management and the current drive to save as much money as possible.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16186606

108. Hospital meal companions appeal launched
16 December 2011 – BBC News
The Royal Cornwall Hospital at Treliske is looking for more volunteers to help seriously ill patients eat their food.

Nurses say meal time companions are important for boosting patients' spirits as well as making sure they eat and drink properly.

Earlier this year the NHS ombudsman criticised some hospitals nationally for failing to look after the elderly who were struggling with tasks.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-16213480

109. Hospitals must assume all elderly people have dementia
17 December 2011 - The Times
Prof. Peter Crome, chairman of the first National Audit of Dementia says because of the high prevalence of dementia staff should expect that their “typical patient” has dementia; fewer than 6% of people are screened for the condition on admission to hospital.

110. Doctors in Kent 'must limit hospital referrals'
17 December 2011 – BBC News
Doctors in Kent have been told to limit referrals to hospital as the NHS tries to balance the books.

The NHS Kent and Medway Primary Care Cluster says the policy is designed to make sure patients consistently get the right treatment at the right time but the request has caused anger among some doc-
111. Health care by TV and remote control
17 December 2011 – BBC News
Case report of Terry Munro and how he keeps tabs on his own health, as he is diabetic, using nothing more than his television.

The testing equipment uses Bluetooth so when Terry has taken his daily measurements they are automatically uploaded to the TV where a trained nurse can access and monitor the readings from a central location and make decisions about potential changes in treatments.

Older People

112. Grandparents in debt as nearly half worry about cost of Christmas
14 December 2011 - Mature Times
Gransnet, the social networking site for Britain's 14 million grandparents, has conducted the first ever survey into the nation's grandparents' attitudes to Christmas.

Read more...

113. Pension age could rise to 74
14 December 2011 - Mature Times
The age at which people can draw their state pension could rise to 74 for those born in 2010, according to a leading accountancy firm. This means the state pension age could be 70 by 2050 or even earlier - rising to 74 by the 2080.

Read more...

114. Happy 20th Birthday Mature Times!
14 December 2011 - Mature Times
“It's celebrations all round this month – and not only for Christmas! At Mature Times we’re lighting the candles on the cake to mark our 20th birthday.

For the last two decades we have proudly led the way in campaigning on the key issues that affect the mature sector:

We've been at the forefront in the fight to save libraries.

We've battled to protect pensions and to curb heating and fuel bills.

Our support for the campaign to reinstate funding for carers was applauded nationally, as were our demands to provide grandparents greater access to grandchildren in family disputes.

The list goes on and – rest assured - we won't stop!

But, as well as highlighting these major concerns, we’ve found time to laugh at life – and at ourselves.

We've outlived several governments, battled through recessions, fought off competition and won over an army of more than half a million wonderful readers.

And today, as we light the candles, thanks to our devoted readers and loyal advertisers we’re stronger than ever.

Said Mature Times Editor, David Thomas: “The last 20 years have seen spectacular changes in the world of newspapers.

“The whole landscape has transformed and with that have come huge challenges.

We’ve had to adapt to new technology, new production and distribution systems and, of course, today the economic pressures are as tough as ever.

“But throughout the years one thing hasn’t changed – and that is our role as a campaigning newspaper – the only campaigning paper in the country – for the mature sector.

“As we all know, the over 50s face daunting challenges in the years ahead and so it’s more important than ever that we have a voice, and that is exactly what this paper provides and will continue to provide.”

Ed. We are delighted at Brunswicks to be able to add our congratulations to Mature Times on its anniversary.
115. Social exclusion among shift workers and older people
15 December 2011 – NCF
A study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) says that older people and those who work non-standard hours are less likely to feel integrated into society.

"Feeling part of society usually involves participating in certain activities such as sports, the arts, volunteering or social networking," says Dr Matt Barnes who led the research. "Our research shows that older people and those who work unusual hours face particular barriers to participating in such activities." http://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk/forums/forum_posts.asp?TID=4653&PN=1

Parliament

21.12.2011 – HoL - Health and Social Care Bill - Committee of the whole House (Day 15) - Earl Howe
21.12.2011 – HoC - The House of Commons will be in recess. The House will next sit on Tuesday 10 January 2012.
22.12.2011 – HoL - The House of Lords will be in recess. The House will next sit on Tuesday 10 January 2012.

116. Parliamentary Questions and Debate from the Past Week
The following section is produced in conjunction with specialists in health and social care, PLMR – Political Lobbying & Media Relations – www.plmr.co.uk

14 December 2011– House of Commons – Written Answer from Care Services Minister Paul Burstow. The Question, tabled by Robert Buckland, Conservative MP for South Swindon, asked what steps had been taken to meet the objectives of the Department's mental health outcomes strategy and what meetings had taken place at a Ministerial level. In response Mr Burstow noted that no meetings had taken place at Ministerial level. He added that officials across all the relevant Government Departments meet regularly to co-ordinate activity and implementation of the strategy.

To view online, click on the following link: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111214/text/111214w0001.htm#111214w0001.htm_sbhd59

19 December 2011 – House of Commons – Written Answer from Care Services Minister Paul Burstow. The Question, tabled by Mark Menzies, Conservative MP for Fylde asked what assessment had been made of the likely effect of the Government's proposed health reforms on dementia care for the elderly. In response Mr Burstow stated that improving the quality of care for people with dementia and their carers was a priority for the Government. He also noted that last year the Government launched a new outcomes focused implementation plan for the National Dementia Strategy.

To view online, click on the following link: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111219/text/111219w0005.htm#111219w0005.htm_sbhd31

Social Care

117. Cuts to workforce development teams 'hindering reform'
12 December 2011 – Community Care
A report by Learn to Care has warned that the Social Work Reform Board may struggle to continue delivering its programme of change in the face of cuts to workforce development teams throughout England.

It has estimated that 800 workforce development posts have already been cut, three-quarters of which are likely to be professional rather than administrative, according to Learn to Care's Local government social care workforce planning and development: a survey of trends and funding 2011 report. http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/12/12/2011/117875/cuts-to-workforce-development-teams-hindering-reform.htm

118. Burstow: Users to shape new online care ratings system
12 December 2011 – Community Care
Paul Burstow has announced that users and carers' opinions on care services will be published alongside ratings of their quality on an online "good care guide" designed to replace the star ratings scrapped last year.

The care services minister said he wanted to develop a social care comparison site - along the lines of travel websites such as TripAdvisor - to provide service users with real-time information to help people choose care homes or domiciliary care providers. http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/12/12/2011/117873/Burstow-Users-to-shape-new-online-care-ratings-system.htm
119. Critical success factors for improving social work
12 December 2011 – Community Care
The Social Work Reform Board's recommendations could provide a window of opportunity for social work to reassert its role and enhance its professional image.

Claudia Megele asks what are the critical factors necessary for their successful implementation? http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/12/12/2011/117876/critical-success-factors-for-improving-social-work.htm

120. Social care reform: Fears over funding plan
14 December 2011 – BBC News
Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, is set to spend the next few months drawing up plans before publishing the details of an overhaul of the social care system in a White Paper in the spring.

The thorny issue of how to pay for the system is still to be resolved. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-16178226

121. The College of Social Work opportunity for independent social workers
15 December 2011 - SCIE
The College of Social Work is looking to appoint 20 highly skilled and experienced Independent Social Workers from across England. This team will attend key meetings and events around the country, engaging with frontline social workers in local authorities, talking to them about the range of exclusive services that are available through The College and encouraging them to join as members.

For further information and to apply visit The College of Social Work website

122. Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has pledged to press ahead with reform of the social care system.
15 December 2011 – Age UK
A White Paper is set to be published in April which may include some recommendations made by economist Andrew Dilnot earlier this year.

Mr Dilnot's review proposed a number of reforms to protect older people from having to sell their homes to pay for care, including capping bills at £35,000. http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/social-care-reforms-to-be-published/

Workforce
Nothing to report
Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!!!

I wanted to send some sort of holiday greeting to clients, intermediaries, friends and colleagues, but it is difficult in today's world to know exactly what to say without offending someone.

So I met with my lawyer yesterday, and on advice I wish to say the following:

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, my best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non addictive, gender neutral celebration of the winter solstice holiday practiced with the most enjoyable traditions of religious persuasion or secular practices of your choice with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all.

I also wish you a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the widely accepted calendar year 2012, but not without due respect for the calendar of choice of other religions/cultures whose contributions to society have helped make our country great (not to imply that Great Britain is necessarily greater than any other country) and without regard to the race, creed, colour, age, physical ability, religious faith or sexual preference of the wishee.

By accepting this Greeting, you are accepting the following terms:

This Greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal.

It is freely transferable without alteration to the original Greeting. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for the wishee or others and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. The wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year or until the issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

Best Regards (without prejudice)

Name withheld (Privacy Act)

Now what I really want to say is...

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR

The above message appears to have gone ‘viral’ on the internet in the past week. However, for those of you who have a vigorous email-filter system I thought you might enjoy it.

Kindest,
Keith
Warnings

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