

NHS Reform Fortnightly Update

26th August 2021

Retrospective report: 12th August – 26th August

12 August

Analysis provided by the Nuffield Trust, based on new NHS data on activity and performance measures, [reveals](#) that the total number of people waiting to start consultant-led elective treatment increased to over 5.4 million in June 2021, the highest level since records began. This follows a previous fall to 3.9 million in May 2020. In addition, in June 2021, 27% of patients waited longer than two months to start their first treatment following an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer, the worst performance for any June on record. The 62-day cancer target for at least 85% of patients to start a first treatment for cancer within two months, has not been met for five and a half years.

14 August

As part of a new campaign, NHS England Chief Executive, Amanda Pritchard, is [encouraging](#) people with potential cancer symptoms to come forward for life saving checks. Research shows that three in five people (60%) are concerned about burdening the NHS, with half (49%) saying they would delay seeking medical advice compared to before the pandemic. The 'Help Us, Help You' campaign will use TV and digital adverts, posters and social media to raise awareness of symptoms of abdominal, lung and urological cancers in particular, amid new figures which show that abdominal and urological cancers account for nearly half (44%) of all cancer diagnoses and two in five (41%) cancer deaths in England.

15 August

According to an [article](#) by *The Financial Times*, English pharmacies will have an 'enhanced' role in the UK's Covid-19 autumn booster programme to help the NHS reduce its vaccine services and focus on clearing the urgent backlog in medical treatments. Senior figures within the health service told *The Financial Times* that they expect the majority of hospital vaccination centres to close to the general public but that a decision from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation had yet to be finalised. One chief executive of a NHS trust said, "*Pharmacies are present in all communities, including the most deprived areas of the country. They are also a more sustainable option than the temporary infrastructure of mass vaccination centres — we're here for the long haul.*"

19 August

On 19 August, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) [confirmed](#) that the Better Care Fund has been increased this year to continue driving integration between the health and social care system and support local recovery from the pandemic. The BCF will grant a minimum of £6.9 billion in 2021 to 2022, including £4.3 billion of NHS funding and £2.1 billion from the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) grant to local authorities and £573 million from the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The Better Care Fund was launched in 2015 to encourage the integration of health and social care by requiring clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local authorities to enter into pooled budget arrangements and agree an integrated spending plan. It represents a unique collaboration between NHS England and Improvement, DHSC, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Local Government Association.

20 August

Scotland is bidding to become a 'world leader' in addressing women's health inequalities according to a new plan unveiled by the Scottish Government last week. [The Women's Health Plan](#) for 2021-2024 aims to raise awareness around women's health, improve access to health care and reduce inequalities in health outcomes for girls and women, both for sex-specific conditions and in women's general health. The Plan sets out 66 actions to ensure all women enjoy the best possible healthcare throughout their lives. It takes on board the real-life experiences of women who have given their feedback on what is important to them.

25 August

On 25 August, the Scottish Government published its [NHS Recovery Plan](#), which sets out key ambitions and actions to be developed and delivered now and over the next 5 years in order to address the backlog in care and meet ongoing healthcare needs for people across Scotland. The plan: committed £1 billion of targeted investment over the next 5 years to increase NHS capacity, deliver reforms in the delivery of care, and get everyone the treatment they need as quickly as is possible; stated that face-to-face consultations with GPs will be restored "as quickly and safely as possible" and promised to increase the NHS' capacity by 10% to address backlog, with nine new National Treatment Centres (NCTs) to be opened to manage this rise in procedures.

Lookahead: 27th August – 9th September (Parliament is in recess until 6 September)

6 September

Adjournment Debate

[Cost of medicinal cannabis](#) - Christine Jardine

7 September

9:25am

The House of Commons Health and Care Bill Committee will meet to begin scrutinising the Bill.

9 September

1:30pm

Westminster Hall Debate - The role of immunology research in responding to the covid-19 outbreak.

Relevant Select Committee Inquiries that are currently open

- Public Accounts Committee - [Digital Transformation in the NHS](#)
- Public Accounts Committee – [NHS nursing workforce](#)
- Public Accounts Committee - [Adult social care markets](#)
- Public Accounts Committee - [COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of personal protective equipment](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee – [Clearing the backlog caused by the pandemic](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee – [Social Care: funding and workforce](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Coronavirus: lessons learnt](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Coronavirus: recent developments](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Department's White Paper on health and social care](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Treatment of autistic people and individuals with learning disabilities](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Safety of maternity services in England](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee – [Supporting those with dementia and their carers](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [General Practice Data for Planning and Research](#)
- Health and Social Care Committee - [Cancer Services](#)
- Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee – [Plastic waste](#)
- Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee - [Long term funding of adult social care](#)
- COVID-19 Committee - [The long-term impact of the pandemic on parents and families](#)

Relevant Consultations that are currently open

- Department of Health and Social Care – [The Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) Regulations 2014: extension of expiry date](#)

- **Department of Health and Social Care** - [Aligning the upper age for NHS prescription charge exemptions with the State Pension age](#)
- **Department of Health and Social Care** - [Changes to giving free prescriptions to people aged 60 and over](#)
- **Department for Work and Pensions** – [Shaping future support: the health and disability green paper](#)
- **Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency** – [Point of Care Consultation](#)
- **Migration Advisory Committee** – [The impact of the ending of freedom of movement on the adult social care sector](#)

Upcoming events

- **Tuesday 7th September:** Westminster Health Forum: [Priorities for delivering social prescribing - progress, integration, funding, scaling up, and helping meet the challenges of COVID-19 recovery](#)