

23 May 2008

DH Structures

The Department of Health currently has six chief professional officers. Chief professional officers are leaders in their professions and provide the Department with expert knowledge about health and social care disciplines. They advise DH health ministers, other government departments and the Prime Minister. The Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer are also board directors.

The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is the Government's most senior nursing adviser. The CNO has responsibility for delivering the Government's strategy for nursing, Making a Difference, and leads nearly 600,000 nurses, midwives and health visitors and allied health professionals.

The CNO is also responsible for a number of key policy areas. One of these is the Information for Choice Programme and another is Patient & Public Involvement.

Information for Choice

Within the Information for Choice Programme, there are a number of different workstreams some of which are:

1 Information Prescriptions

From 2008, information prescriptions will be offered to everyone with a long-term condition or social care need, in consultation with a health or social care professional. Information prescriptions will guide people to relevant and reliable sources of information to allow them to feel more in control and better able to manage their condition and maintain their independence.

2 Information Accreditation Scheme

The Information Accreditation Scheme has a pivotal role in improving patient experience in that it will "kite mark" information producers in order to make it easier for people to make their own judgements about the quality of information to make decisions about their health, health care and social care. As well as supporting people to make more informed choices and take greater control over their own care, the Information Accreditation Scheme will also support information producers, which will lead to improvements in the quality of information.

3 Questions to Ask

Receiving and understanding the right information during an appointment is key to involving people in decisions about their treatment and care. "Questions to ask" supports this involvement by helping people with general questions during a consultation, such as "Are there any side effects or risks?" and "How will I know if the treatment is working?"

4 [Community Information Bank](#)

The Community Information Bank is a project to look at the vast range of electronic health and social services information available and in particular explore how local government and PCTs may work together and with the voluntary sector in ensuring that the right information is made available to their local population. By 2008, PCTs and local government electronic links should enable people so they can find local health information, support services and further contacts quickly and easily.

[Patient & Public Involvement](#)

Within the Patient & Public Involvement Programme, there are a number of different workstreams some of which are:

1 [Section 242 – The duty to consult](#)

Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 (now S242 of the consolidated NHS Act 2006) places a duty on NHS trusts, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities to make arrangements to involve and consult patients and the public in service planning and operation and in the development of proposals for changes.

2 [National Patient Survey Programme](#)

The Department of Health conducted a series of surveys between 1998 and 2002. This series was replaced in 2003 by the national patient survey programme, with surveys carried out locally by NHS Trusts to national standards organised by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI). CHI was replaced by the Healthcare Commission in 2004. The Healthcare Commission is now responsible for carrying out national surveys of the NHS in England. Information on the National Survey of NHS Patients since 2003 is available on their website.

3 [LINKs](#)

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) aim to make it easier for citizens to say what they want from health and social care services, to talk with the people who run them and to hold them to account. Run by local individuals and groups, a LINK is being established in every area in England.

4 [Complaints procedures](#)

The proposals for reform of NHS and social care complaints arrangements were consulted on between June and October 2007. A report has been published that summarises the responses and how the Department has taken them into account in its response, and sets out the detail on its intentions to implement reform of the health and social care complaints processes.

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