



Registered Charity No. 292157

## **E-Bulletin from the National Association for Patient Participation Issue Number 56 October 2011**

### **1. Health Bill FAQs**

The Department of Health has published frequently asked questions about the Health and Social Care Bill. The top ten questions about the Bill identified from evidence submitted to the recommitted Bill Committee in the House of Commons, which met from 28th June to 14th July 2011 can be viewed [here](#). The top ten will be updated as the Bill progresses through Parliament to reflect the latest big questions and answers.

### **2. Influencing the new health system in the local area**

A new briefing aims to help local voluntary and community organisations navigate their way through the NHS reforms for the voluntary sector. Produced jointly by the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Regional Voices, it provides a simple overview of which organisations will be important at a local level and advice on how to engage with and influence them. This will enable the voluntary and community sector to ensure that their concerns, expertise and are taken into account. [Read more](#) .....

### **3. 'Participation is widespread and embedded in British society' NCVO**

The need to motivate patients to join your new or established PPGs, a report, *Pathways through Participation*, could provide useful pointers to keep present members motivated and to encourage more active involvement.

The report summarises the results of a 2.5 year project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in partnership with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) and Involve. The project set out to improve understanding of how and why people get involved in their communities and the factors that shape their participation over time. The researchers interviewed 101 people about their life story of participation in areas of Enfield, Leeds and Suffolk, found evidence which suggests that there are strong foundations for participation that can be developed and encouraged.

The report makes a range of recommendations for voluntary and community organisations, public service providers and central and local government to improve and develop participation. [View the report here](#)

### **4. Walk4Life**

On Sunday 25 September, Change4Life launched a new campaign encouraging adults to get active, starting with ITV's Walk4Life Day. Walks took place across England and Wales and are supported by local walking organisations and local authorities.

Walking is a free and flexible way to get moving and build towards the recommended targets of 150 active minutes a week, for adults or towards your child's' 60 active minutes a day. To find details of where and when walks are taking place near you, simply visit [www.walk4life.info](http://www.walk4life.info) and enter your postcode and dates.

## 5. Easy-read health resources for those with learning disabilities

A new set of pioneering materials has recently been launched on a range of health topics that are particularly relevant to the health of people with learning disabilities. The leaflets which were written with easy words and pictures, make them suitable to give to patients with learning disabilities or indeed anyone who struggles with written information.

Topics include common conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, obesity and thyroid problems. The [leaflets](#) were translated into Easy Read format by the Easyhealth team at Generate from the original clinical topics on the Prodigy website and were subjected to rigorous clinical quality checks.

## 6. New 111 non-emergency health phone number

Currently, around 14,000 people a day call NHS Direct for medical advice, costing £123m a year to run. The Department of Health has announced that it will be replaced by a single three-digit 111 service, which has been piloted in County Durham, Nottingham, Lincolnshire and Luton, and was launched in part of the North East of England at the end of August, as the first step towards a national roll out.

It will give health advice and information about services such as out-of-hours GPs, walk-in centres, emergency dentists and pharmacies. The government says it will reduce confusion and effectively abolish the concept of "out-of-hours" in the NHS.

Dr Clare Gerada, chairwoman of the Royal College of General Practitioners, said: "Not only will callers to the service be advised on what to do but also to be directed to the appropriate local service to address their need consistently. However, patients should be aware that this is not a replacement for the current system and that they can continue to call their GP practice as normal."

The change will not affect existing NHS helpline services in Scotland and Wales.

[For further information...](#)

## 7. New technology could be used for GP consultations

Two interesting possible future NHS developments in technology for the future to excite some and alarm others.

**Skype:** NHS directors are exploring whether to use Skype, a program that allows video phone calls to be made over the Internet, for consultations between GPs and patients. Prof. Sir Bruce Keogh, medical director of the NHS, has been investigating the potential for NHS use of the technology. He has argued that it would be convenient for both patients and GPs, as well as presenting a chance to cut costs. For more details, read [this ....](#)

**Telemedicine:** An interesting [article](#) in a recent issue of Computer Weekly suggests that the use of mobile technology could save health service around £250m a year. Telehealth care enables patients to monitor their conditions using mobile technology. A pilot study in 2005-2007 Kent NHS involved 250 patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Each patient received a device to monitor vital signs, with results automatically uploaded to a central computer, where community matrons and practice nurses monitored them and were able to step in and advise or visit when necessary. This resulted in a 50% drop in hospital admissions.