



COMMUNITY HEALTH

News

ASSOCIATION · OF

COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS

FOR · ENGLAND · & · WALES

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NEWS

A testing time for William Waldegrave

During the last two weeks of April and the first two weeks of May the state of the NHS and the progress of the Government's reforms were the leading topic of political debate in the national media. The clamour of the debate was such that some pundits felt inclined to speculate on a June general election, despite the Government's poor showing at the local elections. Other commentators suggested that under John Major the Government felt more of an obligation to defend its NHS policy against the criticisms of the Opposition than it had under Mrs Thatcher. Since it has more of a stake in promoting "a caring image" and rebutting criticisms of heartlessness, the Labour Party seem to find it easier to force the Government into a defensive posture. Either way the argument took over the centre stage of public debate.

Problems began with the publication of the official waiting list figures for March to September 1990 on 17th April. William Waldegrave claimed a success in the fact that the number of patients waiting for more than a year had dropped by 12% over the previous period. The figures also showed, however, a drop in the total number of people on waiting lists who had received treatment. The Labour Party blamed the decrease on closures made by health authorities in order to "balance the books" in advance of the implementation of the reforms.

Then came the announcement of large job losses in two self-governing trusts, first 600 at the Guy's and Lewisham Trust, then 300 at Bradford. Costs were being cut in order to offer competitive rates for treatment. As the Secretary of State appeared to absolve the Government of any responsibility for the actions of the Trusts, the House of Commons Select Committee on Health asked to see the Trusts' business plans in order to ascertain whether these job cuts could have been predicted. The newspapers ran reports suggesting that the reforms could run out of control as hospitals made ever more desperate moves to preserve their competitiveness. When urged to postpone the second wave of trust applications, the Secretary of State declined to take the advice. The BMA waded in to demand urgent talks with the Prime Minister on the "crisis" and to present its case for an extra £6 billion to be added to this year's health budget. The Prime Minister declined and then later agreed. The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts accused the BMA of misrepresentation. In the background health policy experts were offering opinions on London's teaching hospitals. There were too many beds scrambling for contracts from home counties health authorities and it was a buyers' market. One of the teaching hospitals might have to close, a view which was subsequently confirmed, though less complacently, by a report from the Medical Committee of the Universities Funding Council.

In the meantime it emerged that Watford General Hospital was offering GP budget-holders a better deal than their colleagues

who were not managing their own budgets - six weeks for an outpatients' appointment, thirteen weeks for inpatient admission. The joint consultants' committee of the BMA declared its opposition to any plans for "clinical queue-jumping". The Royal College of Surgeons supported the BMA committee. Both organisations argued that it would be unethical to give patients preference on anything other than clinical grounds. Consultants at the Watford General Hospital also stated their opposition to preferential deals for fund-holders' patients.

The fanfare that was to have accompanied the proposed Green Paper on health prevention and promotion was submerged in all the sound and fury and the release of the consultation paper (apart from a copy leaked to Robin Cook and then savaged in the press) was delayed pending quieter times.

In the wake of the Monmouth by-election the NHS has continued to be the main item for heated debate between the political parties. The argument centred on Labour's claim that self-governing hospitals were "opting-out of the NHS". The Government shrilly denied that hospital trusts were leaving the NHS and accused Labour of lying. At this point other health service organisations started weighing in, notably the NHS Supporters' Federation in support of Labour, and the Royal College of Nursing who rejected Labour's claim that trusts were "opting-out" but pleaded that the NHS reforms were leading to chaos in an "increasingly unrecognisable service".

There is little doubt that the state of the NHS will remain at the centre of public political debate for some time to come.

"No benefit from RMI"

The pilot studies of the Resource Management Initiative, a scheme to involve doctors and nurses in resource planning, have failed to show any advantages for patient care according to a controversial report by researchers at Brunel University. The Government spent £78 million on the resource management test sites in the 1990/91 financial year alone. ACHCEW's Health News Briefing on RMI, published in August 1990, criticised the way in which the scheme was being quickly spread through the NHS with no real evaluation of its benefits for patients.

Repeat prescribing

In a report giving evidence to a Department of Health working group on the future role of pharmaceutical services, the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts has suggested that there are some repeat prescriptions which could be dispensed by pharmacists without the patient returning to the GP. **Daily Telegraph** 29 April 1991

Undetected sight defects

A survey carried out for the Association of Optometrists by the Economists' Advisory Group has found that the number of eye examinations has dropped from nearly 13 million in 1988, when there were last free tests, to 10.2 million in 1990. On the basis of these figures and extrapolating from the known incidence of eye disease in the population, the Association claims that the reduction in the annual number of people taking eye tests represents almost half a million cases of undetected eye disease. The Association also suggested that cases of diabetes, hypertension, and even brain tumours may be slipping through "the diagnostic net" as a result of the decline in the number of people taking eye tests. 57% of those surveyed in the MORI poll commissioned by the Association said that everyone should be entitled to free eye examinations. **Guardian 13 April 1991**
Daily Telegraph 13 April 1991

Abortion pill starts UK trial

In 1988, after vigorous lobbying by anti-abortion groups, Roussel-Uclaf withdrew the 'abortion pill' RU486 from production. The French Government responded by instructing the company to resume production. The pill is intended to prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of intercourse. Women in Manchester and Edinburgh are being now offered the pill in trials which compare RU486 to the standard treatment in cases where fertilisation may have occurred but pregnancy is not wanted. **Independent on Sunday 24 April 1991**

Social fund exclusions

The High Court has dismissed applications for judicial review of three decisions to refuse payments out of the social fund. The Court had to decide (a) whether or not the Secretary of State had acted reasonably in excluding certain categories of need from payments out of the fund (b) whether or not the Secretary of State's directions on exclusions had been properly construed by the social fund inspectors. The Court declared that "the Secretary of State is entitled to exclude from payment from the social fund needs which, on social grounds, are as worthy as those which are eligible for payment and cannot be met elsewhere in the public sector, since social considerations are immaterial to the lawfulness of his decision to exclude a payment". One of the decisions concerned a mentally handicapped man who had applied for money as a community care grant in order to buy clothes after moving out of a hospital into residential care. The application for payment was turned down because of a regulation requiring claimants for such grants to be living "in the community" (or about to move into the community) and the applicant's move from institutional care to residential care did not constitute a move "into the community". **Independent Law Report 18 April 1991**

GP referral letter

Following widespread criticism of the design and content of the standard GP hospital referral letter, the Department of Health has agreed to reconsider it with a view to making any necessary alterations. The British Medical Association wrote to all 35,000 GPs in the country advising them to boycott the referral form on the grounds that it breached patient confidentiality. The problem arose because personal information about patients was on the same part of the form as administrative data which would be seen by non-clinical staff.

Safe birth for all

On 1st May this year a service was held at Westminster Abbey to celebrate the First International Day of the Midwife. International cooperation in midwifery began with the establishment of the International Confederation of Midwives in 1954. In September 1990 the United Kingdom was one of 70 governments who expressed their commitment to a World Health Organisation and United Nations' Children's Fund plan of Action for Safe Motherhood. The aim is to halve maternal mortality by the year 2000.

PARLIAMENTARY NEWS

Disabled Persons Act

In a written answer to an parliamentary question on 22nd March, the Minister for Health, Virginia Bottomley, announced that the Government has decided not to implement sections 1,2 and 3 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultations and Representation) Act 1986. These sections of the Act give disabled people the right to an authorised representative, rights to make representations about their needs, the right to a written statement of the outcome of assessment and the right to review that outcome. The Minister for Health justified the decision by arguing that the NHS and Community Care Act will "reflect and amplify" these clauses and also that implementation would divert money away from services into administration.

Tobacco smoking

A private member's bill has been presented which seeks to amend the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 so as to provide for the control of smoking in places of work. The Health and Safety at Work (Tobacco smoking) Bill received its first reading on April 24th.

Prison medical service

On 22nd May a private member's bill seeking to transfer control of the prison medical service from the Home Office to the NHS was introduced into the House of Commons. The bill is part of a campaign launched by the National Association of Probation Officers and the pressure group, Inquest, which aims to reform a service which is widely seen as sub-standard and lacking in proper channels of accountability. This follows recent criticisms of the service by coroners who have returned "lack of care" verdicts on cases of suicide in prison.

FROM THE JOURNALS

General practitioners' opinions of services for their patients

The 27th April issue of the **BMJ** carries a report of a study in Bristol, which sought "to establish a means for all GPs to express their views about health services available to their patients; to identify those services that GPs perceived as most in need of improvement, and to establish good working relations between the purchasing team of the health authority and local GPs". With advice from the district's GP advisory committees, a postal questionnaire was devised which asked GPs to rate both the quantity and the quality of 24 hospital and 28 community services on a five point scale. "They were asked to consider quantity of care as how much care is available, how accessible it is, and how long it takes to receive it and quality of care as how good care is once it is received. They were also asked to identify five community services that they most wanted to see improved and to rank them in order of priority." The survey has had a considerable impact in Bristol, where it has led to the formation of a GP and consultant liaison group. Correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Nicholas Hicks, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health Medicine, University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 2PR.

Screening in primary care

OXCHECK is a randomised controlled trial begun in 1989 to assess the effectiveness of health checks by nurses in helping patients to reduce their risk of cancer, heart disease and stroke. Interim results from the study are reported in the **BMJ** (4th May 1991). 2205 patients received health checks in the first year of the study, 82% of those who were invited from the five practices involved in the study. 72.8% of those screened needed some intervention or advice for one or more risk factors. The interim report stresses the amount of effort required in order to achieve

such a high acceptance rate in the study population and suggests that in the absence of this effort preventive care would be less likely to reach those most in need of it. The second important result relates to the high workload generated by the screening. "The real work in cardiovascular disease prevention is not in screening but in providing and sustaining follow up".

Assessing needs

April's THS Health Summary details the first report from the NHS Management Executive's DHA project. The example of diabetes is used to illustrate how clinical needs may be related to the organisation of health services in contracts for patient services. The report includes advice on ensuring high quality integrated care, measures of process and measures of outcome. For copies of the report write to Dr. Rhys Williams, Department of Community Medicine, Addenbrooke's Hospital, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 2QQ.

AROUND THE CHCs

Patients' charters

Bradford CHC has produced three different charters listing rights for users of health services, one for mentally handicapped people, one for children and one for the elderly.

Consultations on service changes

In summer 1990 Tower Hamlets Health Authority initiated a formal consultation on a plan to reorganise hospital-based services in the district. The plan subsequently comprised part of the application for trust status by the Royal London Hospital. At the beginning of April the Secretary of State decided to delay a decision on the consultation because of a review of capital funding being undertaken by the Trust Board. In order to "keep within the spirit within which the consultation exercise was conducted", the Secretary has asked that the revised proposals be resubmitted once the capital review is completed and also that the DHA holds further discussions with the local community.

Publicising the reforms

Manchester's three community health councils used a local publication, the Manchester Magazine, to distribute a leaflet they had designed on the recent changes in the NHS. The leaflet provided a space for public comment on how local services could

be improved and within a week of distribution several responses had already been received.

Services for the elderly

South West Herts CHC and South West Herts Health Authority recently joined forces to organise two public meetings to consider a review of health services for the elderly in SW Herts. The CHC will publish a report of the proceedings and proposals that arose out of the workshop sessions.

CHC PUBLICATIONS

On April 18th, Nigel Spearing MP raised the question of the future of the London Ambulance Service in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons. In August 1990 the Management Board of the LAS announced a 3.5% cut in the non-emergency service. Also a volunteer driver scheme has been launched to provide transport to patients who are judged not to be "in medical need" of the non-emergency service. Some of the problems that individuals have experienced because of the contraction of the non-emergency service are catalogued in a report by Newham CHC, Emergency in the non-emergency ambulance service. The report provided Nigel Spearing, who is MP for Newham South, with a great deal of the material for his parliamentary speech, which accused the government of allowing the service to disintegrate. Fears for the future of the non-emergency service were further fuelled when Stephen Dorrell, Under-Secretary of State for Health, declared in the course of the debate that from April 1992 district health authorities in London will be able to purchase these services from agencies other than the LAS.

In evidence presented to the Parliamentary Health Committee on the provision of maternity services, Bath CHC has declared its strong support for the continuing availability of beds in GP maternity units. The CHC argues that "GP maternity units are an important and effective part of maternity services, particularly in a rural area, provided that: there is a clearly agreed booking policy between consultants and GPs; there is careful monitoring and audit of the service; there are effective arrangements for an emergency flying squad; consultant obstetricians review each pregnancy at an appropriate point; and a routine 18 week ultra sound scan is available". The Bath Health District has the highest proportion of births in GP maternity units in England & Wales - 30% and growing. The HA policy, fully supported by the CHC, is to aim for 40%. The CHC's views are founded partly on a survey it conducted in 1989. Although this showed a high level of satisfaction with maternity services irrespective of the kind

of unit in which the birth took place, there was a marked preference for the service provided in the GP units in the first two days after birth.

Haringey CHC carried out a survey of local GPs in the winter of 1990 in order to ascertain the extent of their difficulties in obtaining hospital services for their patients. In October problems had arisen with the the provision of non-emergency transport by the London Ambulance Service. In the summer, and then again in October and December, wards had been closed at local hospitals because of overspending. 31% of Haringey GPs replied to the survey. The CHC acknowledges that this a low response rate, but suggests that the survey may be more representative than it seems because one doctor may sometimes reply on behalf of the whole practice. GPs were asked whether they had experienced difficulties in obtaining local hospital admissions, outpatient referrals or ambulance transport. Problems were common; each kind of difficulty had been encountered by more than one third of the GPs.

Bradford CHC has produced a report of a patient satisfaction survey in the Out-Patients' Department in St.Luke's Hospital, Bradford. The aim of the survey was to establish which features of the visit made either a favourable or unfavourable impression (using a method known as Critical Incident Technique - CIT). 62 patients were interviewed and various areas of concern were highlighted. One notable feature of the results is that those aspects of the service which most frequently made an unfavourable impression - waiting times, communication and customer relations - were at the same time those aspects of the service which most frequently made a favourable impression.

South Cumbria CHC and South Cumbria Health Authority have co-operated to carry out a customer satisfaction and quality of service survey in outpatient clinics at Furness District General Hospital. 642 questionnaires, including patients for seventeen different specialities, were collected and analysed. "The survey indicates that overall the Outpatient Department provides a very satisfactory service for patients."

Concern about the impact of the new NHS dental contract prompted North West Herts CHC to carry out a survey of local General Dental Practitioners. In particular the CHC wanted to find out the extent to which dentists were refusing to take adults as NHS patients. Although one third of the respondents claimed to have changed the running of their practice since the introduction of the new contract, the changes related mostly to administrative matters (more paperwork). The CHC comments that "most dentists are unhappy with the contract, even though on the whole there appears to have been little or no change in the actual running of practices".

Plymouth CHC's report **A second cardiac surgery unit in the South West** gathers evidence for providing the South West region with a cardiac surgery unit additional to the one already sited in Bristol. The main body of the report presents the results of interviews with various doctors, managers and patients.

Newham CHC and Newham Council have published a **Newham women's health guide**. The guide follows two previous editions of the **Women's health handbook** produced by Newham Council's Women's Equality Unit. "We have included details of how you can make the best use of services, such as whether you can contact them yourself or whether you need to be referred by a professional; some indication of services accessible to women with a physical or sensory disability; and whether a service can be used by women who are not confident in speaking English."

Women's health in the nineties is a report of a day conference organised by West Essex CHC. The aim of the conference was to identify ways of promoting better health for women in the District. The report summarises the presentations of five speakers on various aspects of women's health and briefly describes the results of subsequent workshop discussions.

Merton & Sutton CHC has gathered together the views of local voluntary groups on health services. **Health needs in Merton & Sutton as seen by thirty-six voluntary organisations** is based on interviews covering a wide range of patient constituencies or client groups. The questionnaire is not reprinted in the report, though the introduction states that the scope of the questions was very broad "covering health needs and satisfaction with current services". "The purpose of the interviews was to improve the knowledge of the voluntary members of the CHC; raise the profile of the CHC within the voluntary sector; improve local knowledge about the health service; raise the issue of considering the needs of clients and clients' perceptions of services; and to produce a list of needs identified by people in the voluntary sector which would be of some benefit to the health authority and the CHC in their work." The CHC takes a modest view of the status of its findings. "Despite nearly every rule of social studies methodology having been broken it is considered that the qualitative information contained in this report is valuable and useful." And the findings themselves? "GPs are often reluctant to accept people with mental health problems onto their lists; there is a lack of information on available health and social services; health and social services do not meet the needs of ethnic minorities; the ambulance service is poor; and waiting times at hospital are far too long."

Being vocal: the experience of psychiatric services within Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton Health Authority "offers a compendium of users' views on their experience of psychiatric services from first contact with services, through admission and in-patient life, to aftercare and use of community services". The report, which comes from Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton CHC, is based on group discussions and individual interviews "in a wide range of mental health service locations". It also completes the first stage of a two year CHC project, the second part of which is to establish mental health service users' forums.

In response to requests from individuals and consumer groups in the Hastings area, Hastings CHC conducted a study to investigate the need for improved transport facilities to service the new DGH when it opens in 1992. The report of the study, which included a questionnaire survey, considers (1) the adequacy and cost of parking facilities for private transport users (2) the projected needs of the rural and town communities for public transport and (3) the ability of the voluntary transport service to cope with increased demand.

The Walsall Carers' Project, which includes Walsall CHC, Walsall Social Services, Walsall Health Authority and the Walsall Guild for Voluntary Services, has produced a **Carers' information guide**. The guide gives information on services, both local and national, which can help carers as well as their dependent relatives, spouses and friends.

Day surgery - patients' perceptions, a report from Clwyd North CHC, usefully summarises the current literature on this topic and includes recommendations on various procedures relating to admission.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Law Commission consultation paper

As a consequence of several approaches made to the Law Commission in recent years, it has decided to undertake an investigation into the adequacy of legal and other procedures for decision-making on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults. "The existing law relating to decision-making on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults is fragmented, complex and in many respects out of date. There is no coherent concept of their status, and there are many gaps where the law provides no effective mechanism for resolving problems." These problems include: consent to medical treatment; resolution of disputes between estranged

parents of mentally incapacitated adults; uncertainty over responsibility for making "significant life decisions" on behalf of adults who are not capable of doing this for themselves (e.g. should they continue to live at home or be admitted to residential care?); powers of intervention when there is suspicion of neglect or physical or sexual abuse; provision for the future of mentally incapacitated young adults who have been placed under local authority care and placed in foster homes. **Mentally incapacitated adults and decision-making: an overview** considers whether law needs reform and examines the main options for change. The consultation document is available from HMSO and comments should be sent to the Law Commission by 31st July 1991. ACHCEW will also be submitting comments. Those interested should contact the ACHCEW office. Price £6.90

National Audit Office

The NHS Supplies organisation in England spends about £4 billion each year to meet the supplies needs (excluding drugs) of the hospital and community health services. **National Health Service supplies in England**, the latest report from Comptroller and Auditor General on "value for money" in the NHS, tells the House of Commons that the supplies organisation "needs to press home existing initiatives and take new measures in order to stimulate better performance." The criticisms of supplies management are similar to those made of NHS management in other NAO reports, inadequate management information, flawed procedures for controlling costs, uncertainties in "strategic policy formation" and inadequate policy review procedures. Available from HMSO. Price £7.25.

Vitamin supplements

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy has recommended that the mandatory fortification of margarines with vitamins A and D should continue in the United Kingdom. The review of this policy was required by a European Commission opinion that it represented a technical barrier to trade and was acceptable only if a public health need could be shown. **The fortification of yellow fats with vitamins A and D** considers the evidence for the benefits of the policy and weighs these benefits against the possible toxic effects of vitamins A and D. Low vitamin D status is associated with low levels of exposure to ultra violet radiation and contributes to the incidence of rickets, tetanic convulsions in newborn children and excessive bone loss in the elderly. Available from HMSO. Price £5.75.

Child abuse

In 1982 the Department of Health & Social Security published a study of Child Abuse Inquiry reports covering the period 1973 - 1981. The study sought to identify common lessons for practice. The Department of Health has now undertaken a similar analysis

for the period 1980 - 1989. **Child abuse: a study of inquiry reports 1980 - 1989** was commissioned from Philip Noyes, Head of Public Policy at the NSPCC. 19 inquiry reports were written during this time, including most importantly the report of the inquiry ordered by the Secretary of State into child abuse cases in Cleveland. "'The child is a person and not an object of concern' has become the motto for child protection services in the late 80s. How this is put into effect by professionals, the public, parents and children to inform the delivery of services case by case, is the key question for preventing child abuse in the 90s." Available from HMSO. Price £7.85.

Purchasing services for community care

Following the publication in 1990 of the Department of Health's policy guidance on community care, **Community care in the next decade and beyond**, the Department has published two further documents to help local authorities in the implementation of the guidance on the commissioning and purchasing of services. **Implementing community care: purchaser, commissioner and provider roles** was commissioned from Price Waterhouse and considers the strengths and weaknesses of some of the different approaches that may be taken to the separation of the roles of provider of services and commissioner or purchaser of services. The different approaches are distinguished by the different organisational levels at which this separation of function may take place. **Purchase of service: practice guidance and guidance material for social services departments and other agencies** has a similarly practical aim - to help with the implementation of Departmental policy. "The purpose of this paper is not to offer prescriptive guidance but to reflect current thinking about the purchase of services and, where possible, to illustrate with practice examples. It is intended to serve as an aid to further development work both nationally and locally." Both reports are available from HMSO. Price £3.00 and £9.50.

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS

The Consumer Feedback Resource, part of the Kings Fund Centre Quality Improvement Programme, is publishing a series of handbooks and guides "aimed at helping health service staff to understand the issues involved in getting user feedback". First in the series is **An introduction to obtaining the views of users of health services**. This is a "practical guide to enable health care professionals to decide from whom they want to get feedback, why they want to do it, how they want to do it, and in what way they can ensure that service improvements occur as a result". The report, which presupposes no social science background in the reader, begins by distinguishing three different questions which are sometimes run together in patient satisfaction studies: are

patients satisfied with the service (the process of care) they are receiving?; are they receiving the service they need?; what is the effect of the service on their health status? There are chapters on the importance of different types of service user for study design, survey aims, methods, and on the analysis of data. The report ends with a checklist of questions to be asked before embarking on a study of users' views. Available from Bailey Distribution Ltd., Department KFP, Learoyd Rd., Mountfield Industrial Estate, New Romney, Kent TN28 8XU. Price £7.50 plus 75p P&P.

The second handbook in the same series is **Obtaining the views of outpatients**. Outpatient departments are often a source of dissatisfaction and frustration to those who use them. They are also a favourite service for study though patient satisfaction surveys. Why have these studies had so little impact? This reports claims that "one of the reasons is that surveys are not always carried out in ways which produce information which is both accurate and useful, enabling services to be improved as a result". Having thus justified the need for its own publication by pointing to the weakness of past surveys, the handbook proceeds to offer "a practical approach to obtaining the views of outpatient service users, including sample questionnaires, information about non-survey methods, basic information about the analysis and dissemination of results, and how to make use of the information obtained". Available from Bailey Distribution Ltd. Price £6.50 plus 65p P&P.

At home in the community is a directory of housing and support services for people in long term contact with mental health agencies. Published by Good Practices in Mental Health, the directory results from a national survey of services for people with long term mental health problems. 350 projects in England & Wales were sent questionnaires and about one third replied. 64 of these were selected for inclusion in the directory. The introduction disavows the intention of providing a guide to good practice, and there is no explicit statement of the criteria according to which the selection was made. Services are grouped into nine categories: care management; crisis support; resettlement/rehabilitation; housing with support; long term, home-based support; work scheme and leisure opportunities; services for people of different races; services for people with 'challenging behaviour'. The directory, which describes itself as a "resource book for people directly involved in meeting the challenge of community care", is available from GPMH, 380-384 Harrow Rd., London W9 2HU. Tel: 081-289 2034. Price £9.95.

The Disability Alliance ERA has published the 16th edition of the **Disability rights handbook**. The handbook is a guide to rights, benefits and services for all people with disabilities and their families. "A clear and accessible guide through the maze of disability benefits", it costs £4.50 and is available from: Disability Alliance ERA, UNiversal House, 88-94 Wentworth St., London E1 7SA. Tel: 071-247 8776.

Double discrimination: issues and services for people with learning difficulties from black and ethnic minority communities, published jointly by the King's Fund Centre and the Commission for Racial Equality, is a handbook which responds "to the concern about the lack of information on good services for people with learning difficulties from black and ethnic minority communities. Previous discussions and action in this field have tended to be disjointed and ad hoc. This handbook brings together the limited amount of work that has been done so far in this area. Its primary aim is to provide practical suggestions for service improvements. It is written from an anti-racist perspective taking black and ethnic minority people's experience of racism as its starting point and deals with different aspects of services through questions, information and highlighting good practice." The handbook is based on (1) a national postal survey of education authorities, social services departments and community health councils (2) visits to innovative schemes run by statutory and voluntary organisation and self-help groups and (3) detailed studies of the services available in two areas of the country with a significant black/ethnic minority population, one in the North West and one in the South West. Available from King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert St., London NW1 7NF. Tel 071-267 6111. Price £9.95

The Maternity Alliance has revised its leaflet, **Pregnant at work**, which gives up-to-date details of Statutory Maternity Pay and leave, time off for antenatal care, and health rights at work. Sample copies are available by sending a SAE to the Maternity Alliance, 15 Britannia St., London WC1X 9JP. Bulk orders are supplied at 10p per leaflet plus postage and packing. Tel: 071-837 1265.

In July 1990 the National Association for the Childless set up a fertility helpline. 800 calls were received in the first six months. Of these 80% complained that their GP was unsympathetic. These 800 calls have provided the basis for a report **The Fertility Helpline: the first six months**, which has been sent to the Minister of Health with a request that it should be widely distributed amongst GPs. Available from the National Association for the Childless, Birmingham Settlement, 318 Summer Lane, Birmingham B19 3RL. Price £2.50.

Black and ethnic minorities cultural awareness, written by Dr.R.Jayarajnam, Consultant in Public Health Medicine with Newham Health Authority, aims to provide health professionals with basic information about 8 different cultural groups (the main ethnic minority communities in Newham: West Indian, African, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Jewish, Irish, Chinese) so that they will be enabled to deliver services in a sensitive and appropriate manner. The health authority's Ethnic Minority Steering Group suggested that professional staff would benefit from a document highlighting

some of the factors which may affect the services delivered to ethnic groups in the district. The booklet which has resulted from this suggestion is addressed mainly to those "health service staff who do not know enough about black and ethnic minorities groups or have not had experience of racial, cultural or linguistic disadvantage". Topics covered include dietary customs, customs at birth and death etc. Available from Newham Health Authority, 1 Helena Rd., Plaistow, London E13 0DZ. Tel: 081-472 1444. Price £3.50.

Contracts and small voluntary groups is a report of a research project funded by the London Borough Grants Scheme and carried out by the London Voluntary Service Council. The project sought to identify "the support needs of small voluntary groups in a contract culture". 19 voluntary groups in London with five or fewer staff were interviewed and then invited to a seminar. The report gives basic information about the 19 groups and summarises their fears or expectations arising from the replacement of grants with contracts. List of needs (for information, training, advice etc) and recommendations (for commissioning authorities and co-ordinating like LVSC) are appended to the report. Available from LVSC, 68 Chalton St., London NW1 1JR. Tel: 071-388 0241. Price £4.95 for voluntary organisations; £7.95 for statutory organisations.

Illness or distress: alternative models of mental health is a report of a research study which has been carried out by the Confederation of Indian Organisations (UK). Based on a "descriptive account of the perceptions and experiences of a small sample of a randomly selected group of Asians", the report "urges a move away from stereotypes and over-generalisations". "There is a need to start from the user's frame of reference based on understanding the person's own formulation of his/her mental health, taking account of family dynamics, belief systems and cultural constraints. This could lead to the development of a system of care that does not categorise or dehumanise and incorporates the user's needs." Available from the Confederation of Indian Organisations (UK), 5 Westminster Bridge Rd., London SE1 7XW. Tel: 071-928 9889. Price £3.50.

Following the publication of **Public health in England** and HC(88)64, the Department of Health commissioned the Health Care Evaluation Unit at the University of Bristol to perform a rapid review of subsequently produced annual health reports. The review does not attempt to aggregate the data gathered in the district reports. Rather it considers the more general features of the form of the reports, including the set of fields for a data sheet which has been used in entering information from the reports onto a computerised database. Copies of the review, together with the database itself (on 3.5" and 5.25" floppy disks) and a manual for users, are available from the Health Care Evaluation Unit, University of Bristol, Canynge Hall, Whiteladies Rd., Bristol BS8 2PR. The review costs £10.00.

In 1990 the Health Education Authority published **Mapping the epidemic**, a report which described the patterns of mortality from coronary heart disease in England. The HEA has now supplemented the report with posters showing maps of mortality from CHD (for men and women) based on figures for the UK broken down by District Health Authority and Health Board. Copies of the posters are available from the HEA's distribution department, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9TX. Tel: 071-383 3833.

The Channel Four television programme **Same difference** publishes a series of information booklets under the same title. Series VIII no.7 (April 1991) provides a brief description of the reform of family practitioner services and a summary of patients' rights in the NHS. For copies of the booklet send a large SAE to Same Difference, PO Box 4000 London W3 6XJ.

The Pain Relief Foundation, a charity devoted to pain research and based at the Centre for Pain Relief at the Walton Hospital in Liverpool, has produced **The pain tape**, a 40 minute audio cassette tape. The tape explains the nature of pain and describes some simple techniques for controlling it. It also contains a special relaxation programme designed for pain sufferers. The tape may be obtained by sending a cheque for £6.25 to The Pain Tape, PO Box 1, Wirral L47 7DD. The address of the Pain Relief Foundation is: Rice Lane, Liverpool L9 1AE. Tel: 051-523 1486.

North East Thames Health Authority has produced a booklet explaining the nature of the breast screening service in 12 different languages: English, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Urdu, Chinese, Vietnamese, Turkish, Greek and Somali. **What is breast screening?** is available from Outset Publishing Ltd., Unit 8, Conqueror Industrial Estate, Moorhurst Rd., St.Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9NA. Tel: 0424 854124. Price 20p per copy; minimum order 250 copies.

Rural Voice, an alliance of national organisations representing rural communities, has published **A manifesto for rural England**. It includes a section on health services which calls for a halt to the increasing centralisation of health services in towns at the expense of rural areas. The manifesto is available from Rural Voice, c/o ACRE, Stroud Rd., Cirencester, Glos. GL7 6JR. Tel: 0285 653477.

May 31st 1991 is **World No-Tobacco day**. The environmental pressure group Cleanair and the Health Education Authority Look After Your Heart Programme have combined their efforts to produce an A3 anti-smoking poster with the slogan **Heart burn**. The poster is available in an English-only version and five bilingual versions

with English and either Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu or Gujarati. Single free copies of the poster are available on request. Send a large SAE (32p) to Cleanair, 33 Stillness Rd., London SE23 1NG.

Desperately seeking services? is a directory of HIV/AIDS services for women in the Thames area. Compiled by Lorna Ryan, now at ACHCEW, the directory is published jointly by the Health Education Authority and the Women's HIV/AIDS Network. Copies are free of charge and restricted to one copy per order. Available from the HEA Distribution Dept.

INFORMATION WANTED

Salford CHC has been informed by the health authority of a shortage of home nebulisers. The health authority's previous practice of lending nebulisers to those need them has been stopped since many were not returned. The Clinical Director of Medicine has suggested that charitable funds should be used to purchase nebulisers for those who cannot themselves afford what is a relatively expensive piece of equipment. Salford CHC is asking for information from other CHCs who know of schemes either for lending hospital equipment to patients or for using charitable funds for the purchase of this kind of equipment.

West Lambeth CHC would like to hear from any CHCs who have had any contact with any sufferers of "thoracic outlet syndrome". If anyone knows of any sufferers or, ideally, any support group for this condition could they please contact Kate Green at West Lambeth CHC.

Liverpool Central & Southern CHC have set up a self-help group for people experiencing allergies to chemical or environmental pollution. They would like to hear from any other CHCs who have done work in this field or set up similar groups.

York CHC is looking at problems experienced by people who are diagnosed as 'emotionally distrubed' or as having 'behavioural problems' but who are not mentally ill, i.e. are not suffering from a treatable mental illness. Can other CHCs please give examples of services (including support) offered to these people and their carers, and has any CHC identified examples of good practice. Have any CHCs made any study of the same problems, what conclusions did they reach about the availability of services for emotionallly disturbed people and those disagnosed as having behavioural problems?

The National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital is beginning a two year study of the experiences of black and

ethnic minority children and their families in hospital. The researcher, Mary Slater, wants to hear from CHCs who have examples of good or bad practice they would like to pass on. For more information on the project contact Mary Slater at NAWCH, Argyle House, 29-31 Euston Rd., London NW1 2SD. Tel: 071 833 2041.

The Patients' Association Environmental Issues Group is interested in undertaking collaborative work with CHCs on some "non-treatment aspects of care in acute hospitals and long stay settings". These include privacy, food and cleanliness. Any CHC who has information which might be useful to the group or who wishes to work with it should contact Gwen Dain, The Patient's Association, 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London 9PF.

The National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital (NAWCH) is currently conducting a study into the problems faced by parents or carers who wish to visit their child in hospital. They would welcome any information concerning current (completed within the last two years) research on the costs of visiting children in hospital or problems concerned with distance or the complexity of travel to hospital for families with children. Please contact Julie Goulding, NAWCH, Argyle House, 29-31 Euston Rd, London, NW1 2SD.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Mental Health Foundation is holding a re-run of a one day conference on The evaluation of mental health services and treatments. Date: 24th June 1991. Venue: Commonwealth House, London. Fee: £25. For further information contact Lucie Reader, Mental Health Foundation, 8 Hallam St., London W1N 6DH. Tel: 071-580 0145.

Action and change: community development approaches to the HIV crisis is a two day conference organised by the National AIDS Manual. Date: 25th & 26th July 1991. Venue: Friends' House, Euston Rd., London. Fee: £140 statutory organisations; £100 voluntary organisations. For more information contact National AIDS Manual Conference, c/o Labyrinth Training, Flat 1, 16 Guildford Rd., London SW8 2BX. Tel: 071-720 0401.

The Women's Health Network is giving an introductory course in Women's health work and the contract culture. Date: 10th July 1991. Venue: Pankhurst Centre, Manchester. Fee: £30 voluntary organisations; £50 statutory organisations. Contact Justine Pepperell, Women's Health Network, National Community Health

Resource, 57 Chalton St., London NW1 1HU. Tel: 072-383 3841.

The Society of CHC Staff is holding its annual summer school in Nottingham from 10th to 12th July 1991. The fee for attendance at **Partnership in management: opportunity or threat?** is £185. Contact Society of CHC Staff, 1st Floor, 12 New North Parade, Huddersfield HD1 5JP. Tel: 0484 435154.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations is holding a one day workshop on "creative collaboration between salaried and honorary leaders in voluntary organisations". **Making the right decisions** will be held on 3rd July at NCVO offices in London. Fee: £45.00. For further information contact the Management Development Team, NCVO, 26 Bedford Sq., London WC1B 3HU. Tel: 071-636 4066.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Correction: The dialling code for Swansea CHC is 0792, not 07902 as stated in the April Community Health News.

Page 2 - WEST CUMBRIA CHC

Secretary: Bernie Kirk

Page 6 - NORTH DERBYSHIRE CHC

Chief Officer: Mrs Susan Sims

Page 8 - WEST NORFOLK & WISBECH CHC

Acting Secretary: Edith Travell

Page 16 - NORTH WEST SURREY CHC

Secretary: Justin Dix

Page 17 - SALISBURY CHC

Tel No: 0722 324736

Page 19 - KETTERING & DISTRICT CHC

FAX No: 0536 416582

Page 22 - MID STAFFS CHC

Chief Officer: G C W Beazley JP

Fax No: 0785 224094

Page 23 - NORTH WARWICKSHIRE & RUGBY CHCs

These two CHCs have merged to form NORTH EAST WARWICKSHIRE CHC and will be located at the old North Warwickshire office where the Chief Officer will be T R Pitts. Please delete completely the entry for RUGBY CHC.

NORTH BIRMINGHAM

Chief Officer: Mrs Sheila West

Page 25 - CREWE CHC

Mrs Hazel Clarke left on May 10th, but the name of her successor is not yet known.

SOUTHPORT & FORMBY CHC

Tel No: 0704 536262

Page 30 - CEREDIGION CHC

Secretary: Mrs Phyllis V Parry

Page 31 - EAST GLAMORGAN CHC

Chief Officer and Secretary: Clive Barnby

Index - Delete RUGBY CHC
Change NORTH WARKS. CHC to NORTH EAST WARKS. CHC