

Internet sites of interest

Column editor: Keith Nockels, University of Leicester

I am very grateful to Anne Gray for this column. Her article on the Commissioning Handbook for Librarians, published in the December Newsletter, originally included a list of useful websites. Anne kindly agreed to make that list into this column.

The column is not in the usual format. The website URLs appear as footnotes, and we hope that this will make the text describing changes to the NHS, key organisations in the field of health service commissioning, and useful resources, more readable.

The column editor checked all links on 13th February 2012.

Ideas for future columns are very welcome, as are actual columns. Please contact me with ideas or offers. I am especially keen to have offers of subjects relevant to NHS library colleagues, as I, a higher education librarian, am likely to miss those!

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NHS Commissioning – a brisk walk through the changes, organisations and key resources

The ongoing changes to the NHS, in particular relating to primary care and commissioning of health services, will affect everyone working in health & social care. As a result enquiries around commissioning, service redesign or delivery could be routed to libraries in any part of the NHS. Here I have described the major changes, the key organisations and some of the important resources.

Changes in NHS commissioning

The coalition government policies (**Health & Social Care Bill**¹ and the Public Health white paper **Healthy lives, Healthy People**²) are changing the landscape of commissioning across health and social care services in England. The Department of Health's **Modernisation of Health and Care** website³ has news, resources and links to key government documents around these developments and policies. The organisational changes include:

¹ http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/current_projects/the_health_and_social_care_bill/index.html

² <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Healthyliveshealthypeople/index.htm>

³ <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk>

- **Primary Care Trusts** (PCTs) will cease in April 2013. They have been grouped together to form **PCT Clusters** to manage their legal responsibilities until that time, and **Commissioning Support Organisations** are being set up with a view to become ongoing providers of support services in the new commissioning world.
- Meanwhile GPs and general practices are forming themselves into **Clinical Commissioning Groups** (CCGs) and preparing to take on responsibilities for many of the functions previously carried out by PCTs⁴ including redesign of care pathways and contractual arrangements for many of the NHS health services. There is a (growing) list of websites of the new CCGs on the Commissioning Handbook For Librarians⁵
- The **NHS Commissioning Board**⁶ (NHS CB) will be responsible for oversight of the CCGs, monitoring the quality of commissioning across England, and some specialised services.
- At the same time, as a result of changes outlined in the new public health White Paper, "Healthy Lives, Healthy People"², public health teams are moving out of PCTs into local authorities (LA). They will work with CCGs, hospitals, community services and social services through **Health & Wellbeing Boards**⁷ (HWBs) to develop and maintain services to meet the health and social care needs of their communities. From April 2013 public health activities will be overseen by a new national body - **Public Health England** (PHE). PHE will have an intelligence function which is currently under development and it is unclear what will happen to the evidence collated and published by the **Public Health Observatories**⁸ (PHOs). PHOs currently publish key tools and documents, including health profiles, morbidity and prevalence data, and collections around particular topics⁹ such as Children & Maternity, Alcohol, Obesity and Diabetes.
- **Strategic Health Authorities** (SHAs) have been clustered into larger organisations pending their closure in April 2013 and their functions are being dispersed across a number of organisations.
- Education and training responsibilities (including library services) are moving to a new national body – **Health Education England** (HEE). HEE will provide national leadership and oversight on strategic planning and development of the health and public health workforce, and allocate education and training resources. **Local Education and Training Boards** (LETBs) will be the vehicle for providers and professionals to work with HEE to improve the quality of education and training outcomes so that they meet the needs of service providers, patients and the public.
- **QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Productivity, and Prevention)** is the coalition government's quality improvement programme for the NHS in England. The key budgetary target for the NHS, to cut £20 billion from the NHS budget, is often called the QIPP challenge¹⁰. The **QIPP collection on NHS Evidence**¹¹ is a small collection of case studies to support this programme.

There are a number of significant organizations in the field of health service commissioning.

- The **Department of Health**¹² (DH) is obviously central to the commissioning of health services. Navigate the DH website using the Quick A to Z at the bottom of each page

⁴ <http://www.nhsmanagers.net/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/pctfunctions.pdf>

⁵ <http://commissioning.pbworks.com/w/page/47509612/03%201%20Clinical%20Commissioning%20Group>

⁶ <http://www.commissioningboard.nhs.uk/>

⁷ <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/category/public-health/hwb/>

⁸ <http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=39436>

¹⁰ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/policy-areas/nhs/qipp/>

¹¹ <http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/qipp>

¹² <http://www.dh.gov.uk/>

and from here you can use the policy filters to select appropriate sections. Updates on policy developments and news around the health service reorganization are posted to the **Modernisation of Health and Care website**¹³.

- The **King's Fund**¹⁴ is an independent health management research organization working on key research areas relevant to the NHS. Their updating services are a key resource for workers in the field. The King's Fund library is the major health management library in England. The library catalogue is online along with Reading Lists on key topics of current interest. The Kings Fund is a major contributor to the **Health Management & Information Centre (HMIC)**, the major UK bibliographic database in its field.
- The **Nuffield Trust**¹⁵ is another an independent source of evidence-based research and policy analysis whose research areas and publications are of interest to those in NHS commissioning.
- As the key professional body for GPs, **Royal College of GPs** has created a Centre for Commissioning¹⁶ to support the development of CCGs and the **British Medical Association (BMA)** has produced a collection of Guidance for GPs on the NHS reforms¹⁷.
- Resources around integration of services across health and social care are available on the Local Government Improvement and Development website commonly known as IDea¹⁸ from the **Local Government Association**. The Knowledge zone¹⁹ contains the latest good practice gathered from across local government.
- The **Social Care Institute for Excellence**²⁰ (SCIE) published resources on topical issues such as integration and personalisation, and manages the **Social Care Online**²¹ bibliographic database which includes research on all aspects of social care and social work in the UK. While the search interface on Social Care Online is poor, there are plans for an upgrade in the near future. A **SCIE Athens account**²² is available through SCIE for social care and local authority staff giving access to social care journals.

Useful resources

NHS Evidence²³ has brought together a huge range of quality resources around health and social care. Using the NHS Evidence topic collection²⁴ and NHS pathways²⁵ you can find guidelines and clinical research around a wide range of clinical areas. However the filters tend not to support the detailed searches required to answer questions around commissioning of clinical services.

Systematic reviews on the Cochrane Library²⁶ are the best summaries of clinical evidence to support patient pathway design and the economic evaluation studies (from the NHS Economic Evaluations database²⁷) can give useful pointers to articles which include cost information which is key to the commissioning process.

¹³ <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk>

¹⁴ <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk>

¹⁵ <http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/>

¹⁶ <http://commissioning.rcgp.org.uk/>

¹⁷ http://www.bma.org.uk/healthcare_policy/nhs_white_paper/gpcwhitepaperguidance.jsp

¹⁸ <http://www.idea.gov.uk/>

¹⁹ <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=71665>

²⁰ <http://www.scie.org.uk/>

²¹ <http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/default.asp>

²² <http://www.scie.org.uk/workforce/athens/>

²³ <http://www.evidence.nhs.uk>

²⁴ <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/topics>

²⁵ <http://pathways.nice.org.uk/>

²⁶ <http://www.thecochranelibrary.com>

²⁷ <http://www.crd.york.ac.uk/crdweb/AboutNHSEED.asp>

The clinical bibliographic databases such as Medline and British Nursing Index (BNI) include useful material, but it is often difficult to retrieve relevant items because the indexing concentrates on clinical content not service design or delivery.

The **Commissioning Zone**²⁸ on NHS Networks has become an important repository of publications, toolkits and resources around commissioning. The Zone was recently updated and resources are now assigned as Policy & guidance, Reports & analysis, Data & tools and Resources but the network still has very little structure. However the weekly update is a good way to keep up to date. **NHS Networks**²⁹ also hosts other networks, such as Commissioning for Long Term Conditions³⁰ and the Health Investment Network³¹ which are key areas of interest to commissioners.

And finally,

For librarians a key resource is the **Commissioning Handbook for Librarians**³². This collaborative resource was developed by a group of primary care librarians aware that existing Library & Knowledge Service resources did not adequately support their work for commissioners. The Handbook is structured to reflect the **Commissioning Cycle**³³ which is commonly used to describe the steps of commissioning and is key to understanding the processes involved. Originally intended to supplement the Commissioning Specialist Library on NHS Evidence, the Handbook is maintained by librarians and supported by SHALL³⁴ as a resource to support share learning around commissioning. For more information see the article by Anne Gray in HLG Newsletter December 2011³⁵, take a look at the Handbook and sign up for the Handbook Newsletter³⁶.

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²⁸ <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/commissioning>

²⁹ <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/>

³⁰ <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/commissioning-for-long-term-conditions>

³¹ <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/health-investment-network>

³² <http://commissioning.pbworks.com/>

³³ <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/commissioning>

³⁴ <http://www.libraryservices.nhs.uk/>

³⁵ <http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/health/Documents/Articles.pdf>

³⁶ <http://eepurl.com/fT8xn>