

Action Cerebral Palsy

Political & Parliamentary Monitoring – Week commencing 30th April 2018

Local elections took place across the country this week. The top line analysis is that the three major parties benefitted from a significant collapse in the UKIP vote. UKIP lost 103 councillors, reducing the Party to just two councillors overall. Labour failed to win new councils in London and did not achieve the results some were expecting in the run-up to the local elections, fuelling comments that the peak of Jeremy Corbyn's popularity has passed. Jeremy Corbyn said the Party had achieved a "solid set of results" highlighting the fact that Labour has won 45 seats across England in places which it has never held before. Conservative Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox said the Tories' results had been at the "higher end of expectations."

The Tories performed well in areas with a substantial leave vote in the 2016 referendum, where they picked up a considerable number of votes from UKIP; while Labour performed well in places where the remain vote was stronger and with a higher proportion of younger voters. Labour failed to gain a single council in London, having targeted Wandsworth, Westminster, and Barnet, the latter of which is being attributed to anti-Semitism in the Party and the high number of Jewish voters in the area. Meanwhile outside of the capital, Labour lost control of Derby. Bedworth In Warwickshire and Nuneaton but did win back Plymouth and became the largest party in Trafford.

The Liberal Democrats had a positive night, regaining control of Richmond in London from the Tories and gaining seats elsewhere. The Conservative vote is up by 13 points where more than 60% backed leave but down by one point in areas where less than 45% voted leave. The Conservative Party also struggled in places with where there were more graduates and people from an ethnic minority background.

Overview

- [The Lancet finds child mortality rate one and a half times higher than Sweden](#)
- [Government publishes plans for Nursing Associates in England](#)
- [Technical issues result in 450,000 women denied breast cancer screening](#)

The Lancet finds child mortality rate one and a half times higher than Sweden

The Lancet has [published](#) a comparative study of child mortality rates in England and Sweden, to look into the extent to which “adverse birth characteristics and socioeconomic factors” determine the difference between child mortality in Sweden to that of England, where it is “almost twice as high.” It found that the difference is “largely explained” by England’s relatively “unfavourable distribution of birth characteristics,” which could be countered most successfully by improving the health of women before and during pregnancy. Socioeconomic factors were found to have more of an impact after one month of age.

Dr Ronny Cheung from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) [responded](#) to the study saying, “At a time where public health budgets are being cut, the very services that are required to help improve these rates are being lost. We need a commitment from Government that health visiting services will be protected - helping professionals support mothers at risk of ill physical and mental health, in addition to providing stop smoking services, breastfeeding support and weight management advice to those at-risk groups.”

Government publishes plans for Nursing Associates in England

The Government has [published](#) the outcome of its consultation on expanding the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s (NMC) governing legislation – the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 – to grant the NMC the legal power to regulate the nursing associate profession in England. The intention of this change is to ensure that the associate nurses – a new role in healthcare – are held to the same standards and granted the same safeguards as nurses and midwives, “except where it is necessary to accommodate specific differences in the nursing associate profession.”

In announcing that it would implement the proposals, the Department of Health and Social Care said that it had “broad support” from industry. Going forward the NMC will register, set standards, approve training programmes for, and carry out fitness-to-practice activities on associate nurses. Nursing associates training through a programme not approved by the NMC will be able to join the register up until July 2019, after which point they must be on an NMC-approved course. NMC inspections will be carried out by nurses until the associate nursing profession matures and there are enough qualified nursing associates in the role to manage it. Nursing associates will not be able to prescribe even on a temporary basis such as in times of national emergency.

In England, it will be an offence for someone to call themselves a nursing associate unless they are registered with the NMC and hold the requisite qualifications; while those with comparable

qualifications from the devolved nations will be able to be put on the register. The Government noted that many of the respondents to the consultation called for this measure to be applied across the UK. The Government has not done this because nursing associates are not prevalent outside of England and such an offence comes under other crimes, such as fraud in Scotland.

State-Enrolled Nurses (SENs) will no longer be able to join the NMC register, although existing registrants will be able to remain on it. UK-trained SENs have been unable to register since the late 1990s and there are currently only 11,000 on the SEN register, with “this number diminishing each year.” In future applicants from outside the UK will be directed to the associate nursing or sub-part 1 of the register.

NMC Chief Executive and Registrar Jackie Smith said: “Since our council agreed to become the regulator for nursing associates we’ve been working hard to make sure everything is ready to welcome the first nursing associates on to our register in January 2019. It’s clear that there’s widespread support for the proposed approach to regulation and while there’s still more work to be done, today is an important landmark. It’s critical that the government now push forward with these changes to enable us to open the nursing associate part of the register on time.”

The NMC is currently consulting on the standards to which they will hold nursing associates, as well as the content of training programmes. We will consider whether it would be beneficial for ACP to respond to the consultation ahead of the submission deadline on 2nd July.

Technical issues result in 450,000 women denied breast cancer screening

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt revealed this week that technical difficulties in the NHS had resulted in 450,000 women not being called to breast cancer checks, *The Times* [reported](#). It has been estimated that this caused up to 270 premature deaths. The technical difficulties have gone undetected for nine years and were only identified in January of this year, following a modernisation of the computer systems used. This is despite several separate concerns being raised previously. Public Health England and the NHS are blaming one another for the problem, as NHS England has responsibility for spending but does not run the 79 hospitals that provide breast cancer screening; while Public Health England has responsibility for preventative strategies but does not provide services. Both organisations manage the computer system.

Hitachi, which manages the computer system, attributed the concerns to a local issue that had been resolved when Public Health England’s regional teams investigated the concerns last year, which

were raised by hospitals in London and the West Midlands, following women at the age of 70 not being invited to checks, despite that being policy.

Baroness Morgan of Drefelin, Chief Executive of the charity Breast Cancer Now, said: “We urgently need to understand why quality-assurance measures did not pick this up and what procedures will be put in place to ensure such a colossal mistake is never repeated.” Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth said: “It seems extra-ordinary that while breast cancer screening rates were falling, serious questions were not being asked, especially as we are now hearing reports of GPs warning of missed tests.”

Ministers have also been urged to provide assurances that bowel and cervical cancer screenings were not affected, after former Conservative Health Secretary Andrew Lansley blamed health cuts for his own bowel cancer going undetected until it reached stage 4.