



# SPOTLIGHT ON RURAL HEALTH

This newsletter is provided by the Rural Health Network, part of the Rural Services Network. It includes a roundup of rural health news, research, learning and best practice.

PLEASE FORWARD TO COLLEAGUES IF YOU FEEL THEY MAY BE INTERESTED IN RURAL HEALTH ISSUES.



## NEWS

News stories that have been featured on our [rsnonline.org.uk](http://rsnonline.org.uk) website include:

### [Fund to tackle rural fuel poverty](#)

A £150m fund to install affordable heating solutions in fuel poor homes could benefit rural households.

The [Warm Homes Fund](#) was unveiled by the National Grid and its partner company Affordable Warmth Solutions. It is split into



## [Rural Conference 2017](#)

Not long now to secure your space at the Rural Conference 2017. Held in Cheltenham by kind permission of the University of Gloucestershire on 5th and 6th September there is a wide range of expert speakers who will talk to the overall theme:

The Infrastructure of Success, New Routes to Economic Growth

[Click here for all the details and to book your place now!](#)

three categories focusing on urban, rural and health-related solutions to help supplement traditional funding streams.

#### [Researchers focus on rural wellbeing](#)

Researchers are keen to hear from people about their experiences of well-being and the countryside.

Due to open in October, the issue of rural well-being will be the focus of an exhibition at the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading University. The exhibition will be displayed at the museum in Reading as well as online – making it accessible to people all over the world. Researchers are interested to hear from people who would like to tell them about how their life in a rural setting has impacted on their well-being mentally or physically.

#### [MPs debate rural ambulance funding](#)

Devon MP Sarah Wollaston has taken the government to task over lack of funding for rural ambulances. Dr Wollaston, who represents the Totnes constituency, told a Westminster Hall debate her concern had been triggered by a number of incidents. "People have contacted me either directly or indirectly to raise concerns about



#### [RURAL COALITION STATEMENT 2017](#)

The Rural Coalition has released its statement for 2017 which sets out key principles, policies and actions which they would urge the new government to apply to rural communities.

The following four principles should underpin policy making:

- Brexit discussions must recognise 'rural' is more than agriculture and the natural environment.
- All Brexit negotiations and post-Brexit policies must be rural proofed.
- Policies and funding must deliver a fair deal for rural communities.
- Decision-making, funding and delivery must be devolved and involve rural communities.

long waiting times faced by my constituents," she told MPs on Wednesday (12 July).

### [Licence concern for community transport](#)

Rural community transport operators may face extra licence requirements, the government has suggested. The suggestion affects some community transport providers bidding for local authority bus service contracts. A letter from the Department for Transport suggests providers may require a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator licence. The letter was sent to the Community Transport Association, whose chief executive Bill Freeman described it was "not the news that any of us wanted".

The Rural Services Network believes the government's decision could have particular implications for rural community transport providers.



### Rural Health in the Press

[Cash-strapped councils told to meet 'undeliverable' bed-blocking targets or have social care funding slashed](#) (Independent)

English councils have been threatened with cuts to social care funding if they fail to meet "virtually undeliverable" targets to reduce bed-blocking. The Government has ordered councils to reduce the number of people remaining in hospital when they are fit to be discharged by as much as 70 per cent before winter, or see social care funding withdrawn from them in the Spring Budget next year...Analysis by the County Councils Network (CCN), which represents county councils in England, revealed that rural councils, all mostly Conservative controlled and representing more than 26 million people, were given the hardest targets, averaging at 43 per cent – double the target of London. (21 Aug 17)

## SCRUTINISING RURAL HEALTH

An article written by Kerry Booth of RSN and Councillor Jim Clark, the Chair of North Yorkshire County Council's Scrutiny of Health Committee appeared in the Local Government First Magazine in July.

It explores issues being experienced by rural areas in relation to accessing health services and challenges decision makers to ensure fair access to services for all.

[Click here for the article \(on page 27\)](#)

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### Graduate-only medical degree aims to boost rural recruitment

(23 June 2017)

The British Medical Journal highlights a new course starting next year which is aimed at easing recruitment and retention issues in general practice as well as encouraging people to consider working in rural areas.

BMA Scottish medical students committee chair Mita Dhullipala said: 'We are pleased to see that

### Health fears of rural residents in Northumberland as bid to save £641m from NHS gets under way

(Chronicle Live)

Rural residents in Northumberland and North Durham fear they will be starved of services under plans to cut £641m from the North East's NHS by 2021.

Health and social care bosses have released the results of a "public engagement process" on the draft Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, and North Durham. (4 Aug 17)

### Looming countryside health crisis as stoic elderly 'won't make a fuss'

(The Telegraph)

A crisis in countryside health care could be looming because of the number of older patients who are reluctant to "make a fuss" and seek out help, a new report suggests. The Public Health England study warns that one in six areas with the worst levels of health and deprivation are in rural areas, with "pockets of real hardship" in areas assumed to be idylls. (18 March 17)

[To find out more about the Rural Health Network, click](#)

applications will open for the new graduate level medicine course this autumn. 'The NHS in Scotland is facing significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of doctors and this is one way to encourage more people into a career in medicine.' Health secretary Shona Robison said the new course was an innovative way to attract talented people to study and pursue a career in medicine in Scotland.

[here.](#)

The Rural Health Network was established to bring together organisations and individuals with an interest in rural health to network and share best practice.

Anyone can join, please contact [admin@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:admin@sparse.gov.uk) to be included in our mailing lists.



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The Rural Services Network is an organisation comprising over 100 local authorities and 120 other public service providers seeking to establish links across public service, identifying and broadcasting best practise and making representations on rural service issues. For details please visit our website

[www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk)

If you would like to find out more about our services or to join, please contact us on 01822 851370 or [admin@sparse.gov.uk](mailto:admin@sparse.gov.uk)

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