



22 September

HFMA comment

Paul Briddock, Director of Policy, Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), commented on the Public Accounts Committee report on 'Improving access to mental health services':

"We welcome the publication of the Public Accounts Committee's *Improving access to mental health services* report, which outlines the challenges of mental health provision and funding. Our joint research with NHS Providers in May looked into the disparity between mental and physical health services, and the progress that had been made to overcome these challenges, with the aim of achieving parity of esteem. This highlighted that there was a lack of clarity from commissioners as to how the extra funding was being distributed and utilised.

"Yesterday's report concluded much of the same. Parity of esteem between mental and physical health is an ambition the sector wants to achieve, but the current pressures on the NHS budget makes this much more challenging to achieve. Financial strain means commissioners and providers have to make difficult decisions in terms of prioritisation in order to work within the resources they have available. However, it is important that commissioners are open and transparent about how these funding decisions are made and where resources will be focused in order to reach front line services.

"The sector also need to better align what it means to meet parity of esteem commitments to create more joined-up services and structures, that clearly incentivise commissioners and providers to make their delivery of quality care in mental health provision a priority."

HFMA

The HFMA is the voice of 10,000 NHS finance directors and finance staff working in healthcare. HFMA is a registered charity and the only professional body in the UK dedicated to setting and promoting the highest standards in financial management and governance in healthcare, through encouraging more effective use of resources.

Their membership represents the majority of NHS finance directors and NHS finance staff. As the voice of two thirds of NHS finance staff (with 90% working in the NHS), HFMA's membership includes CEOs, directors of finance, clinicians and practice managers, as well as other staff at all levels of the finance function.

As well as promoting best practice, they also offer education and CPD resources for the UK health economy through both their local and national networks

Further information about HFMA activities can be found on their website – www.hfma.org.uk or through their Twitter channel, @HFMA_UK

shaping healthcare finance...