In brief

The number of patients diagnosed with dementia in England has risen by 131,000 between 2006/07 and 2013/14, according to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). There were 213,000 patients diagnosed in 2006/07 and HSCIC's provisional figures for 2013/14 show 344,000 people with the condition. tinyurl.com/ooedvt3

A nurse-led programme to improve the care of patients who have had hip and knee replacements has cut the number of days they spend in hospital. United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust has piloted an enhanced recovery programme whereby a multidisciplinary team care for patients. The average length of stay for a patient on the programme is 2.9 days compared with a national average of five.

Elaine Farrer has been named director of operations at Colten Care, which runs 19 residential, nursing and dementia care homes in Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire. Ms Farrer, a general and orthopaedic nurse, has more than 30 years' care sector experience.

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) has set up a membership network to help raise the standard of care for people with cardiovascular disease (CVD). The BHF Alliance will support practitioners working with people affected by or at risk of CVD by sharing best practice and developing skills. tinyurl.com/BHFAlliance

Around 20,000 people in their sixties will be offered bowel cancer screening in Tayside, Fife, Grampian and Glasgow health board areas, as part of a pilot programme. The 15-minute colonoscopy procedure will allow a doctor or nurse to detect growths in the lining of the bowel that could become cancerous.

Hospital’s renovation makes its public spaces more user friendly

A SCHEME to improve a hospital’s public areas for people with dementia has opened in Yorkshire.

The refurbished facilities at St Luke’s Hospital, Bradford, include two gardens, signs to aid patients find their way, and brightly decorated corridors with accompanying artwork.

Dementia project manager and nurse Danielle Woods said: ‘It’s estimated that one quarter of people in hospital have some degree of dementia and the unfamiliar surroundings and bustle of a busy ward can be disorientating for them. As a result they can become distressed, anxious or agitated.

‘Our new public areas have been designed to create a comfortable and relaxing setting for people with dementia-related illnesses. The spaces have also been designed to aid orientation, through clear sight lines and visual markers.’

Patient Marlene Aveyard, a member of the scheme’s project board, unveiled a commemorative plaque at the opening. Ms Aveyard was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 2009. She said: ‘The renovations have made the environment so much more calming and visually the changes will help me a great deal as they used vibrant colours.’

The scheme was funded by a £513,000 grant from the Department of Health.

Confidence boost for dealing with distressed or confused patients

NURSES CAN learn how to make hospital stays easier for emotionally vulnerable patients with the help of a guide produced by a mental health specialist nurse.

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust nurse Joy Bray has co-authored Brief Encounters, a guide for nurses and other acute hospital staff on how to deal with distressed or confused patients confidently.

It says staff should be aware of situations that may be stressful for patients, such as being in a busy hospital environment, and those who feel anxious, frightened and distressed because they are in hospital.

The guide covers general topics such as dealing with sensitive issues, humour, body language, voice, touch and boundaries.

It also gives guidance on caring for patients with specific emotional needs, such as those with dementia, depression, learning disabilities, bipolar disorder or patients who are experiencing psychosis or delirium:

Dr Bray said: ‘It is emotionally difficult if your patient is distressed and you are not sure how to respond. Brief Encounters is designed to increase your confidence and recognise that often how you want to respond is the right thing to do.’

Find out more
Brief Encounters can be downloaded at www.brief-encounters.org/get-the-kit

Government review seeks nurses’ opinions on future training needs

HEALTH EDUCATION England is calling on nurses to give their views on how nurse education and training can be improved as part of its Shape of Caring review.

The national body is carrying out the review with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. It is seeking evidence on the type of workforce required to respond to future challenges and meet the predicted needs of patients and the public. Practical examples are sought across eight themes.

Find out more
To respond by September 17 go to tinyurl.com/shape-of-caring