

West End Ward Surgeries



Now that the school Easter holidays are underway, my usual weekly ward surgeries do not take place, but I can still be contacted on any local issues or concerns through my e-surgery – just e-mail esurgery@frasermacpherson.org.uk.

Surgeries recommence on Monday 17th April – surgery details are available [here](#).

I can also be contacted at home at any time on 459378 and also during office hours at my Dundee City Council office on 434985.

Labour questions legal basis for abandoning NHS treatment targets – Ashworth

Labour have today questioned the basis for the downgrade of NHS treatment targets announced this week, saying the changes could contravene patients' legal rights under the NHS Constitution.

Speaking on Sky's Sophy Ridge Show this morning, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth said he would write to Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt seeking urgent clarification of the legal advice underpinning the move.

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, said:

"The NHS Constitution isn't just a pledge by politicians, it's a legal guarantee about the standards of care that patients can expect to receive in the English NHS. That includes a guarantee to treatment within 18 weeks, which NHS England have now said they can no longer provide because the Government has denied them the funding they need.

"Government ministers need to urgently clarify they are not breaching the NHS Constitution and must outline the consequences of denying patients their legal right to treatment within 18 weeks. As a first step the Secretary of State must publish his Department's legal advice urgently.

"Earlier this week NHS chiefs announced – without any public consultation or changes to the law – that the NHS will no longer be required to meet the 18 week treatment target because the financial crisis has got so bad. It's utterly unacceptable and a striking admission of how badly the Tories are running the NHS.

"Since Theresa May became Prime Minister standards of care for NHS patients have been in a rapid downward spiral. She might be prepared to ignore NHS staff and the public but she can't just ignore the NHS constitution based on legislation voted upon by Parliament.

"The Government now urgently needs to clarify the legal basis upon which the 18 week right has been jettisoned. Will they be amending the NHS Constitution to remove these rights from patients? Will they be tabling new legislation in Parliament to unpick these commitments? Or will they finally give the health service the funding it so desperately needs to deliver the quality of care to which patients are entitled?"

Ends

Note To Editors

Full text of the letter to Jeremy Hunt from Jonathan Ashworth:

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to ask for urgent clarification about the legal basis of the changes to NHS standards announced in the update to NHS England's Five Year Forward View.

Every relevant provider is under a legal duty imposed by part 9 of the National Health Service Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Responsibilities and Standing Rules) Regulations 2012 to see 92% of patients within 18 weeks of referral by a GP to a consultant . For the last 10 months on the basis of figures provided by the NHS itself this standard has been missed. The update indicates that the NHS accept this standard will further decline.

The update document says:

"Given multiple calls on the constrained NHS funding growth over the next couple of years, elective volumes are likely to expand at a slower rate than implied by a 92% RTT incomplete pathway target."

This is an acceptance the 92% requirement will be missed.

The duty to meet the 92% is absolute and is not subject to any funding constraints.

The absolute nature of this legal duty to meet the 92% is reflected in the NHS constitution.

The Government and NHS England are acting unlawfully in continuing on a course which puts them in breach of their legal duty. The only way to avoid a breach for the future is to change the duty in part 9 by further legislation. That would require the Government to obtain parliamentary approval.

In the absence of any proposal for such legislation, The action described in the update document last Friday is unlawful. Could you publish your Department's legal advice on whether you are breaching part 9 in what is described in the update.

Will you in any event as a matter of urgency explain the basis on which you say you are entitled to ignore the legal duty in part 9?

Secondly and separately the reference to rationing of NICE approved drugs is a breach of the legal entitlement of patients pursuant to para 7 and 8 of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Constitution and Functions) and the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Functions) Regulations 2013).

The effect of these paragraphs is correctly summarised in the NHS Constitution as:

"You have the right to drugs and treatments that have been recommended by NICE for use in the NHS, if your doctor says they are clinically appropriate for you."

That entitlement is not subject to financial constraints. Rationing would be a breach of the entitlement.

Could you publish as a matter of urgency the legal advice you have received on whether rationing of NICE approved drugs is lawful in the light of the 2013 regulations, and in any event explain the

basis on which you say rationing of NICE approved drugs on cost grounds is not unlawful?

NHS England made clear that the reason for downgrading these guarantees is because of “real pressure from rising demand within a tight funding envelope.” The funding squeeze you have imposed on the health service is now jeopardizing legally guaranteed standards of patient care.

Since Theresa May became Prime Minister standards for NHS patients have rapidly fallen. She might be prepared to ignore NHS staff and the public but she can't just ignore the law and the NHS constitution.

The public urgently need to know: will you be bringing forward legislation to amend the law and the NHS Constitution to remove these rights from patients? Or will you finally convince the Treasury to give the health service the funding it so desperately needs to deliver the quality of care to which patients are entitled?

Jonathan Ashworth MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Health

[China shuts down 18 illegal live streaming apps](#)

A total of 18 live streaming apps have been closed for disseminating illegal content, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) announced Sunday.

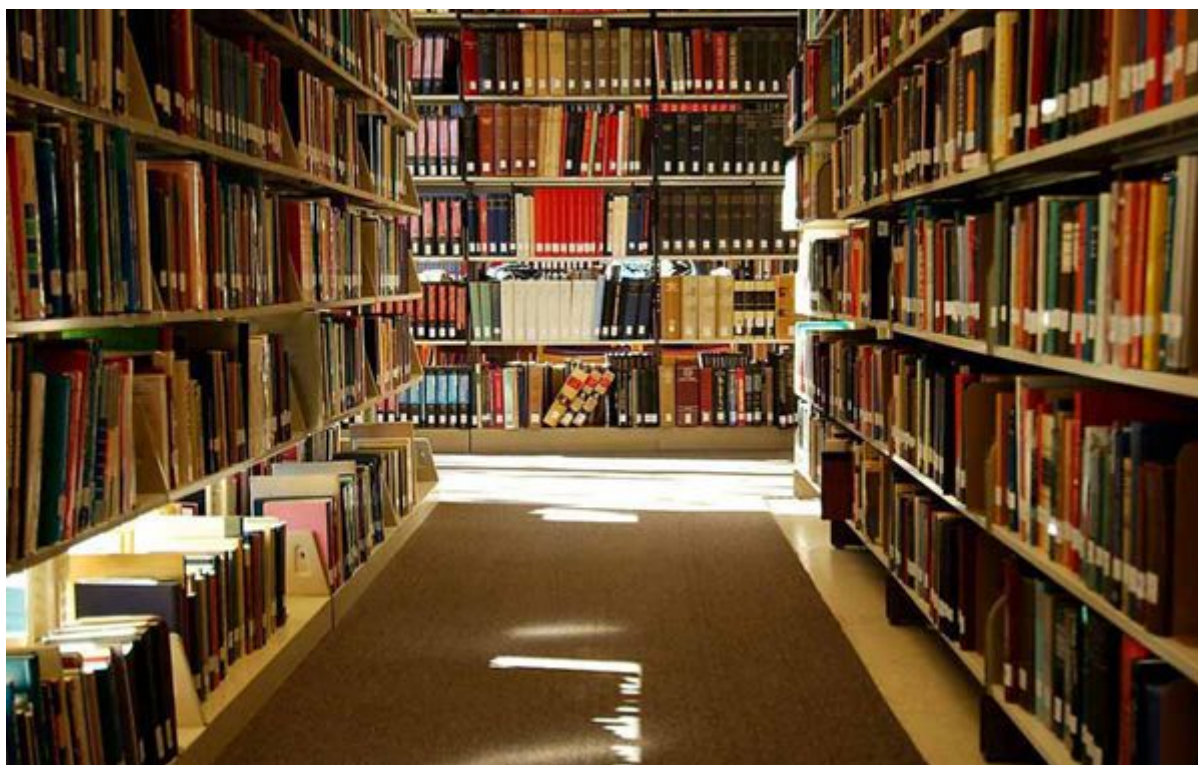
Some app operators were punished for the lack of a mechanism to censor content, and some anchors used the platforms to spread illegal content, dressed in military or police uniforms or were scantily dressed and acted flirtatiously, according to CAC.

Some anchors publicized their WeChat or QQ accounts during live streaming to induce fans to engage in prostitution.

“The online behavior of the anchors violated relevant Internet information service or live streaming laws and regulations, offended socialist core values, and brought negative impact to the healthy growth of the young and teenagers,” CAC said.

The administration vowed to step up inspection and law enforcement.

[New online library platform gaining in popularity](#)



A file photo of a library [Photo: Baidu]

“Book Borrower,” an online library platform, has become popular with about 2,000 books being borrowed every month only one year after it was officially opened, reported Beijing Youth Daily on Sunday.

Only service fees paid, deposits to be returned

Users can choose the books they like on “Book Borrower” after paying a service fee and a deposit. Deposit will be returned to users after they return the books. Service fees include postage and packaging fees. Users are responsible for sending the books to stipulated places after they are finished reading.

The platform was developed by Chen Dongzan in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, in late 2015. In March 2016, the platform went online on Wechat. On the first day of its operation, Chen gave away bookmarks with QR codes of the shared library outside bookstores and libraries in Harbin, and got his first customer that evening.

After a month, the platform had 38 users, most of whom were locals in Harbin. Currently, the users are mostly office employees and university students with

female readers accounting for 64%.

No reading period limit to make it convenient for users

From Chen Dongzan's perspective, "Book Borrower" is a platform that is in between buying books and borrowing books from public libraries.

"The cost of buying books is relatively high and placing them at home takes up much space, while borrowing books from public libraries is not time efficient," said Chen.

Chen says avoiding the shortcomings of buying books and borrowing books from public libraries has become the goal the online library is striving for.

Not proper time to talk about making profits

"Free of charge is why many previous book borrowing websites failed," said Chen Dongzan.

Different from previous platforms, all the funds related to book borrowing on "Book Borrower" are offered by users. Chen said that there is little pressure for capital for the time being. However, it's still too early to talk about making profits.

Chen says that the key to a lasting operation is to keep books in a mobile situation where no books will be on bookshelves for a long time.

Chen says he's grateful that many longtime users were borrowing seven to eight books at a time by the end of 2016, which is a much higher number than before. Users who borrow twenty books at a time are also on the increase.

Chen said the platform is planning to set up storage in user intensive areas to make delivery quicker and cheaper in the future. "To make every family have a bookshelf with 300 books" is the vision and ultimate goal for "Book Borrower."

[China braces for more rail travelers during holiday](#)



Passengers crowd the Nanchang Railway Station in Nanchang city, Jiangxi province, on Saturday, April 1, 2017. [Photo: Chinanews.com]

China will see a surge of rail travelers during the Tomb-sweeping Day holiday starting Sunday.

China Railway, the national railway operator, expects the number of trips in the country to hit 45.2 million over the four-day travel rush, a 9.5 percent increase year on year.

The travel peak is expected on Sunday when train trips could reach 12.8 million, up 10.1 percent year on year.

The company said it would add more trains to meet demand.

Tomb-sweeping Day, also known as Qingming Festival, is the most important occasion for Chinese to honor their ancestors.