

Decline in NHS quality' reported

25 May16 International Medical Press

Over the past year the quality of patient care has deteriorated in a number of areas, according to a report from The King's Fund.

A new report from The King's Fund has revealed that 65% of trust finance directors and 54% of Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) leads feel that patient care has declined in the past year.

Only 2% of trust finance directors and 12% of CCG finance leads said that patient care had improved in the past 12 months.

Findings are based on a survey of 241 trust finance directors and 149 CCG finance leads. The think-tank says the latest findings are the 'most worrying' since it began monitoring this in 2012.

It said that the report highlighted the 'increasing strain the NHS is under as it struggles to manage increasing pressure on services within constrained resources'.

Key areas affected include A&E, with over 8% of patients experiencing waiting times of more than 4 hours last year. Hospital delays and hospital waiting times have also increased, with the number of patients waiting for hospital treatment estimated to have risen to 3.7 million, a year-on-year increase of 17%.

In addition to reduced quality of care, over half of CCGs are 'concerned' about meeting cost improvements targets in 2016–17, despite a £1.8 billion funding boost that aims to support NHS providers in reducing deficits and improving services.

Dr Richard Vautrey, *General Practitioners Committee (GPC)* lead claimed that the latest findings should not be a surprise to anyone given the 'massive and growing financial pressure' that the NHS is under.

He went on to say: 'The government must listen and not only commit to invest to funding the NHS to levels comparable with other EU countries but also stop promoting populist policies such as seven-day working that have little if any clinical evidence to support their implementation.'