



News

1. What's going on within the LINK?

i) LINK called upon to act on Pain Services

At a recent meeting of the Kent County Council's (KCC) Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Kent LINK was called upon to look into the services available for those people in constant pain. It was suggested that certain parts of the county are not well served in this respect.

The Chief Medical Officer for England, in his recent Annual Report, has drawn attention to the need to improve certain aspects of pain services provided under the NHS.

We would be interested to hear from LINK participants about their experiences.

ii) Speech therapy services

The Kent Wide Downs Syndrome Group has called on the LINK to take up their concern at the lack of speech therapy in Medway. It is said that so concerned are parents at this situation that they have formed their own speech therapy group. The LINK has made representations to the NHS in Medway and is awaiting a reply.

iii) Evidence given on hygiene

John Fletcher, LINK Governor, appeared before the KCC's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 March 2009 to give evidence as part of that Committee's investigation into Kent's health services' compliance with the 'Hygiene Code'.

Although hospitals have gone to great lengths to make cleaning fluids available, very few people appear to use them. Surveys indicate that about 50% of people pass by without using them. John called for supervision of these areas, particularly at peak times.

The paper which John presented and which has been circulated to all LINK participants, suggested that hospitals' disinfectant policy should be reconsidered (together with the general use of antibiotics) in order to continue to improve hospital hygiene and to reduce the incidence of infection.

If you have any comments to make on any of the above you can make them by telephone on 01303 297050, email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or via our website at: www.thekentlink.co.uk/index.php?q=17

KENT LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

Issue 10

31 March 2009



2. LINK event to discuss the issues

The agenda for the first Kent LINK 'Quarterly Event' is being designed around the main areas of interest identified by LINK participants and what our LINK Development Workers have identified as local issues:

- Finding an NHS Dentist in the county
- Self Directed Support of Social Care Services – which includes Direct Payments
- Transport and car parking charges at hospitals
- Access to mental health services
- End of life care

There will also be reports from the Governors' Group of the LINK and a report on the LINK's contribution to the Annual Health Check 2008/2009.

The event is being held from 10.00am to 4.00pm on **Monday, 6 April 2009 at the Riverside Community Resource Centre, Dickens Road, Gravesend, DA12 2JY.**

If you are intending to come for the morning session and would like lunch, please let the Kent LINK office know by email at info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or by telephone on 01303 297050.

3. Working together – learning from one another

NHS West Kent and the Kent LINK are jointly planning the above event to provide Primary Care Trust (PCT) key staff and LINK participants with the opportunity to explore how they can develop a robust partnership to ensure successful changes are made to health care across West Kent.

The event will be held from 12.30pm to 4.30pm on Wednesday, 29 April 2009 at West Kent PCT Offices, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN1 1RE (parking available in Waitrose car park nearly opposite). Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Objectives of the event are to:

- gain greater understanding of each other's role
- identify what would make a successful working relationship
- agree how to share information and learn from each other
- agree how best to work together for the benefit of the local community

For more information contact either:

- Elayne Oxley, Kent LINK Development Worker (West Kent)



Tel: 07976 596410

Email: elayne@kentlink.org

- Julie Van Ruyckevelt, West Kent PCT
Tel: 01732 375200
Email: Julie.VanRuyckevelt@wkpct.nhs.uk

4. Changes to prescription, dental charges and prescription vouchers comes into being on 1 April 2009

From 1 April 2009 changes will be made to prescription charges and some dental treatments in England. The value of optical vouchers will also increase by an overall 2 per cent.

The prescription charge exemption for people being treated for cancer, the effects of cancer or the effects of cancer treatment also comes into force from that date. This new scheme will benefit up to 150,000 people already diagnosed with cancer, who might otherwise pay around £100 a year in prescription charges.

Optical vouchers help with the cost of spectacles and contact lenses for children, people on low incomes and people with complex sight problems.

The maximum dental charge for complex NHS dental treatments, such as the fitting of crowns, bridges or dentures will be frozen at the existing rate of £198. For the simplest and most common visits to the dentist, involving an examination, advice and any necessary x-rays or scale and polish, the charge will go up by 30 pence from £16.20 to £16.50. The charge for intermediate treatments such as fillings or extractions will increase by £1 from £44.60 to £45.60.

Prescription charges will increase by 10 pence from £7.10 to £7.20.

5. Health Network (NHS West Kent)

The NHS in West Kent needs people with an interest in local healthcare to sign up to its Health Network.

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) is trying to recruit at least 1000 people to give their opinions and feedback and discuss their own experiences of healthcare. The Health Network currently has 550 members living and working across West Kent.

You will have the opportunity to provide suggestions for improving services and have a

KENT LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

Issue 10

31 March 2009



chance to debate local issues about patient and public involvement, join review groups which can comment on PCT strategies, policies and literature or simply sign up for the latest information.

If you become a member you can put in as much or as little time as you like, it will also give you the opportunity to work with doctors, nurses, therapists and planners in the early stages of planning new services in your particular field of interest.

For further information contact Emma Cain (Public Liaison Officer) by email at Emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or by telephone on 01732 375287.

6. Mencap change of name

From 1 April 2009 DGS (Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley) Mencap will be changing its name to DGSM yourChoice. Although the charity will remain affiliated to National Mencap the affiliation level has changed its meaning, therefore DGS Mencap is no longer able to use the Mencap name.

There are a few reasons for the new name:

- In April 2008 National Mencap rebranded adopting a new logo and website. As part of the rebranding they asked all local Mencap groups to adopt their new logo. As a large Mencap affiliation DGS Mencap has its own identity and brand in the North Kent and Medway areas
- A consultation exercise amongst service users, staff, members and volunteers gave a clear message that the Mencap name should be dropped. At their AGM in September the name DGSM was confirmed.

As well as the new logo, their website has also undergone a change with a new design and both were launched at the Spring Ball on Saturday, 28 March 2009 with a special event taking place on Friday, 3 April 2009.

For further information telephone 01322 281833 or visit the website: www.dgsmyourchoice.org.uk

7. Personal health budgets

Lord Darzi announced through the 'High Quality Care for All' report that a pilot programme should be launched to look at the potential for personal health budgets.

It was thought that personal health budgets would improve the quality of a patient's care and provide more opportunities for choice and control over the services they receive.



Personal health budgets could work in a number of ways but could be held by commissioners or a third party and managed on behalf of the patient.

The Health Bill, which is currently before Parliament, seeks to allow the piloting of direct payments for health care which would see payments being made directly to patients, similar to the 'Individual Payments' system used by Social Care Services.

Primary Care Trusts will need to work with Local Authorities and third sector organisations to provide guidance and support to people being offered personal health budgets as part of the pilot. They will also need to seek external validation through bodies such as Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) to ensure the views of key local bodies are reflected and to enhance the credibility of users of the service.

For further information contact the Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, telephone 020 7210 4850, email dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093842

8. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer

Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer, has published his Annual Report for 2008 in which he draws attention to major health challenges requiring immediate action and details progress made in key areas identified in previous annual reports.

The report highlights the need for:

- **Passive drinking – the collateral damage from alcohol**
Society to change its perception of alcohol and to begin to make being drunk socially unacceptable.
- **Prostate cancer – diagnosis**
Better information being made available about diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer and for research to be continued into the early identification of which low and intermediate risk tumours will progress to life-threatening tumours.
- **Pain – breaking through the barrier**
Training in chronic pain should be included in the curricula of all healthcare professionals and that a pain score should become part of the vital signs that are monitored routinely with patients in hospital.
- **Safe medical practice – machines, manikins and polo mints**
Simulation training to be fully integrated and funded within training programmes for clinicians and that training needs to be valued and adequately resourced by NHS



organisations. The Chief Medical Officer also wants National Patient Safety Agency serious incident reports made available to simulation centres to embrace learning to prevent such incidents in the future.

- Antimicrobial resistance – up against the ropes
Better use and closer control of antibiotics to help protect their effectiveness, research and development of new antibiotics and ‘alert’ information on packaging to better inform people of the rising resistance of antibiotics and to encourage responsible use of them.

For further information contact the Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, telephone 020 7210 4850, email dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website:
www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_096280

9. MRSA rates drop again

The Healthcare Commission has praised progress in infection control as numbers of patients with MRSA continue to fall across the country. It demonstrates the hard work put in by NHS staff to improve standards within hospitals but it is vital that improvements continue to be made.

For further information contact The Healthcare Commission, Freepost LON15399, London, EC1B 1QW, email feedback@healthcarecommission.org.uk, telephone 0845 601 3012 or visit the website:
www.healthcarecommission.org.uk

10. Travel insurance required for visits to the Channel Islands from 1 April 2009

UK residents visiting the Channel Islands must ensure they have adequate travel insurance from 1 April. The recommendation comes from the Department of Health, as the healthcare arrangements for UK visitors to the Islands are due to change.

The current agreement, which allowed UK travellers to get a limited number of medical treatments in the Channel Islands free of charge, will end on 31 March. Anyone travelling to the Islands, which include Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Sark and Herm, will be required to pay for medical treatment should they become ill or injured there after this date. Visitors from the Channel Islands to the UK will also now be liable for charges for medical treatment when visiting the UK, so they should also have health insurance cover.



For further information contact The Department of Health Customer Service Centre by telephone 0207 210 4850, email dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk/en/News

Events

1. New training sessions throughout 2009

The Volunteer Centre Swanley & District are planning to put on a number of training sessions throughout 2009 for volunteers and anyone else who is interested. They include:

- Responsibilities of Trustees (2 x half days)
- Emergency First Aid (full day)
- Moving and Handling (full day)
- Personal Safety (half day)
- Mental Health Awareness (half day)
- Confidentiality (half day)

If you are interested in any of these sessions and are not a volunteer there is a small charge of £15 per person.

For further information contact either Pauline or Della by email at info@swanleyvolunteers.com or telephone 01322 669292.

2. Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust Board meetings

The next meetings of the Trust Board will be held at:

- 10.00am on Wednesday, 22 April 2009 at 35 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4AX
- 10.00am on Wednesday, 27 May 2009 at 35 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4AX

For further information contact Val Woodin, The Board Secretary, HQ, 35 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4AX, telephone 01227 812205, email val.woodin@kmpt.nhs.uk or visit the website at: www.kmpt.nhs.uk



3. Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS Trust Board meetings

The next meetings of the Trust Board will be held at:

- 10.00am - 1.00pm on Wednesday, 20 May 2009 at The Imperial Hotel, Prince's Parade, Hythe, CT21 6AE
- 10.00am - 1.00pm on Wednesday, 15 July 2009 at Hempstead House, London Road, Bapchild, Sittingbourne, ME9 9DD
- 10.00am - 1.00pm on Wednesday, 23 September 2009 at The Ark, Noah's Ark Road, Dover, CT17 0DD

For further information contact the Communications Team, Brook House, John Wilson Business Park, Reeves Way, Chestfield, Whitstable, CT5 3DD, telephone 01227 795050, email communications@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk or visit the website at: www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk

Consultations

1. Application to open new pharmacy in Northfleet

Sainsbury's Supermarket has applied to open a pharmacy at their store at Wingfield Bank, Pepperhill, Northfleet, DA11 8JH.

For further information contact Linda Gibbs, Kent Primary Care Agency, 11 Station Road, Maidstone, ME14 1QH, email linda.gibbs@kpca.nhs.uk or telephone 01622 655134.

2. Fairer Charging Guidance

This paper is a consultation carried out by the Department of Health on the extension and revision of the statutory guidance for charging for non-residential social services, the 'Fairer Charging' guidance. The accompanying guidance refers to contributions for personal budgets, which consist solely of adult social care funding. The aim of the new guidance is to provide councils with a system for calculating how much a person should contribute to their personal budget. It has been produced as a companion to the existing Fairer Charging guidance.

KENT LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

Issue 10

31 March 2009



You are invited to send your views on a number of specific points which the Department has identified in the consultation document.

For further information contact Paul Brittain, FCC Team, Department of Health, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG, telephone 020 7972 4280, email FCC@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_093730

3. Pacesetters

Pacesetters is a collaboration between the NHS and local communities that aims to address patient and workforce inequalities that arise from discrimination and disadvantage. All comments and criticisms will be taken into account as the programme moves forward.

For further information contact Adiba Enwonwu, Equality and Human Rights Group, Department of Health, Room 688D, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London, SE1 6LH, email mb-nhs-change-programmes@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_096364

Contact Information

The Kent LINK may be contacted via the Host Organisation as below:

KMN, Unit 24 Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4RH

Tel: 01303 297050

Email: info@kmn-ltd.co.uk

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm (Answerphone available out of office hours)