



News

1. What's going on within the LINK?

i) LINK's first quarterly event

The Kent LINK's first quarterly event was held at the Riverside Centre in Gravesend last Monday.

LINK quarterly events are not about making decisions, but they do provide a measure of accountability to the LINK for those working on its behalf, such as the Governors' Group. Such events are also one of a number of ways LINK participants can receive information and raise issues involving health and social care in the County.

The programme for the event was designed around some of the major issues which LINK participants had identified, which included:

- Dental services – see separate article in Bulletin
- Self Directed Support – a presentation by the Kent County Council – a copy of this presentation is available on request
- End of Life Care – a presentation by the Eleanor Foundation – a copy of this presentation is available on request
- Mental health services in Kent - see separate article in Bulletin

Participants present at the event also supported proposals that the LINK:

- Carry out a survey of NHS hospital car park provision
- Enquire into arrangements for providing stroke services in Kent, particularly in the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells area

Work will commence on these two pieces of work and updates on progress will be posted in future Bulletins.

ii) Review of patient satisfaction

In the Bulletin of 17 March (Issue 9) we reported that a Sittingbourne GP had called on the LINK to assist in the evaluation of the results of their annual patient satisfaction survey and to assist in an action plan being drawn up. Five LINK Participants came forward and three were selected to meet with the practice. That meeting has now taken place with the following actions to be taken forward:

- To invite patients to engage with the practice by attending an informal meeting, perhaps on a bi-monthly basis. Terms of reference for this group meeting would be made known. The invitation would be posted in the surgery, placed in the



local papers and the Health Matters paper readily available in the surgery waiting room. It may also be on local village websites

- To inform patients about their toy policy which has had to change due to the Health Authority's approach to infection control
- To be breast feeding friendly on the condition that a suitably heated room can be made available.

The LINK is grateful to Dr C Ramu of the Milton Surgery, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne and the following LINK participants for assisting the practice in this way:

- Tony Wellsted
- Lyn Gallimore
- Christine Locke

iii) Selection Event

There is to be a 'Selection Event' on Friday, 24 April 2009 to determine which LINK participants should take on the roles of:

- 'Authorised visitors', who can be called upon by the LINK to enter and view health and social care premises when needed
- Member of the 'Priorities Panel' which is a small group of LINK participants that consider how issues raised by LINK participants should be dealt with using guidelines laid down by the LINK to ensure that all voices are heard
- LINK representatives on health and social care commissioning and provider groups

2. LINK participants pose some challenging questions

At the Kent LINK's Gravesend Event last week a number of questions raised by participants were put to James Sinclair, Director of Social Care for the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust. They included:

- *Concerns over perceived inadequacies in services for older people and those with dementia*
James pointed out that there had been a significant increase in Admiralty Nurses across Kent.
- *Delay in the review and redesign of mental health services in East Kent*
The Trust is committed to redeveloping the St Martin's Hospital site in Canterbury and planning permission for such a scheme has been approved by Canterbury City Council. However, the economic downturn may delay the start of this redevelopment. It was pointed out that the Trust's commitment to developing new services at this site remained.

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- *Delays in implementing NICE recommendations*
James is to come back to the LINK with further information.
- *Closure of Elmstone Ward (Thanet)*
This was part of the plan to reduce beds and partly on health and safety grounds. Only five patients had been in the property.
- *Lack of out of hours services*
A new psychiatric liaison service had been introduced in the East of the County, with the aim of improving out of hours support.
- *User empowerment and Self Directed Support*
It was confirmed that mental health users would be part of the Self Directed Support scheme, although its implementation was two years away.
- *Stigma*
James said that anti discrimination and reducing stigma was a major component against which the Trust's performance is judged by the Care Quality Commission. Developing strategies in conjunction with partner organisations to combat this was something on which the Trust would continue to work.
- *Waiting time for counselling*
The LINK was advised to direct this question to the Primary Care Trusts in Kent and Medway.
- *Discrimination – need for staff training*
James referred to recent appointments in the Trust – an Equality Lead and Equality Group. He acknowledged that more needs to be done in this area, but they were making progress.
- *Domestic abuse*
James didn't think this was anything especially to do with mental health although a participant pointed out the difficulty carers experience in coping with a partner who may be violent as a result of their condition.
- The discussion also included issues involving:
 - help with returning to work after illness
 - lack of inpatient alcohol treatment centres
 - homelessness
 - social care and psychological support
 - lack of mental stimulation in residential homes
 - care in residential setting for elderly mentally ill

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



3. Support for Darent Valley Hospital

Would you like to help influence the development of services that are provided at Darent Valley Hospital?

One way is to become a NHS Foundation Trust Member. Membership costs nothing and you will have the opportunity to become involved in their future. Your involvement can be as little or as much as you like.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust is renewing its application to become a NHS Foundation Trust – still part of the NHS, still aiming to provide high quality accessible patient care for all our community, but having more independence from central government. They are looking for members from all walks of life from the age of 16 upwards who want to support their local hospital. If you have any questions about becoming a member, or would like to receive the membership forms, please telephone 01322 428865 or 01322 428256.

The website below gives a direct link to the membership forms for completion of an online application:

www.darentvalleyhospital.nhs.uk/page.asp?node=463&sec=Membership

4. Working together in West Kent

Kent LINK participants either living, working or receiving services in West Kent are invited to an event to discuss how the LINK is to work with NHS West Kent who are responsible for the commissioning and development of health services in West Kent. They also provide primary health services, such as GP and dental services.

The event is being held on Wednesday, 29 April 2009 between 12.30pm – 4.30pm at the Angel Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge, TN9 1SF and is only open to LINK participants.

If you wish to take part contact Becky on 01303 297050 or email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk. Closing date for bookings will be 22 April.

5. Investment in dentistry in West Kent

Tenders are being invited by the NHS in West Kent which will result in a significant increase in general dental and orthodontic services in the area. An investment of £2.6m will buy nearly 75,000 additional treatments for general dentistry and 14,000 orthodontic treatments.

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The new services are expected to be introduced at earliest September 2009 and at latest January 2010.

If anyone in West Kent is experiencing difficulties in finding an NHS dentist they can seek assistance from the NHS West Kent's Customer Services Helpline at NHS West Kent 0800 0850 850. Advice on help with the cost of dental care can be obtained from the Benefits Enquiry Line on 0800 882 200.

A concern raised by LINK participants that allegedly some NHS dentists are not taking on children is being investigated by NHS West Kent.

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

The next Bulletin will contain information on what is happening in East Kent with regard to dentistry.

6. GPs and dentists required to register with CQC!

A new framework to regulate the safety and quality of health and social care services has been published by the Department of Health, ahead of the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) coming into effect on 1 April 2009.

From 2010 / 2011, the CQC will register all providers of health and adult social care services against a single set of registration requirements that are focused on the safety and quality of care. Without registering with the CQC, it will be illegal for health and adult social care organisations to provide services that are in the scope of the new framework. To maintain their registration, providers will need to demonstrate an ongoing ability to meet all the requirements.

Given the increasing range of services offered in primary care, including minor operations and other services traditionally provided in hospitals, it is important that patients have the same degree of protection, regardless of where they receive their care. This means that, for the first time, all 8500 GP practices and 9000 high street dental practices will be required to register with the CQC, regardless of whether they provide solely private, solely NHS services, or a mix of both.

Consultation on the draft regulations is now open at:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_096991

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This new system replaces the different sets of existing requirements and standards for each different provider - whether they are from the NHS, local authority, independent or voluntary sectors. The registration requirements provide flexibility for care providers, setting out what they must do, but not stipulating how they must do it.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the registration system will be introduced from 2010 / 2011.

For the NHS, registration with the CQC against requirements on healthcare associated infections will be implemented from April 2009.

For further information contact the Registration Consultation, Room 3E58, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, email registration.consultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_096991

Events

1. Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Board Meeting

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

1.00pm Friday, 5 June 2009 Room 105 - 106, Maidstone Hospital,
Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, ME16 9QQ

For further information telephone 0845 155 1000, email gspinks@nhs.net or visit the website:
www.mtw.nhs.uk

2. South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust Board Meeting

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

10.00am – 1.00pm Tuesday, 9 June 2009 8 Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Tunbridge
Wells, TN2 4QL

For further information contact Louise Hutchinson, South East Coast Ambulance

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Service NHS Service, 40 - 42 Friars Walk, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2XW, telephone 01273 897805, email louise.hutchinson@secamb.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.secamb.nhs.uk

3. Free media training

Kent Volunteers are providing free Media Training Workshops for voluntary groups:

- 11 May 2009 - Kings Hill Conference Centre, Maidstone
- 1 June 2009 - Oakwood Park, Maidstone

Both events are being held from 9.00am to 4.30pm.

For information contact Kent Volunteers by email at margaret.sherrif@kent.gov.uk or telephone 01622 694844.

Consultations

1. Pharmacy application - Tonbridge

Comments are invited on an application by Damian Ltd to open a new pharmacy at Warders Medical Centre, East Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1LA.

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

Contact Information

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

KMN, Unit 24 Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, 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)

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