



News

1. What's going on in the LINK?

a) *LINK and the Total Place Agenda*

Words like 'seamless' and 'joined-up' in relation to public services have been the focus of much serious thought and endeavour, only to fall foul of professional, political and financial boundaries. Total Place is the latest initiative to tackle this 'giant' and LINK participants at their next quarterly event will be asked to come up with examples of where the seams or gaps in organisational boundaries are still evident.

The LINK event will be held on:

**Thursday 25 February 2010 from 10.00am to 3.00pm
The Riverside Lounge, Angel Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge, TN9 1SF**

Other topics which LINK participants will have under discussion at this event will include an update on the LINK projects:

- Stroke care services in West Kent
- Day care services for older people
- Hygiene and cleanliness in hospitals
- Transport to hospitals, including the recent Department of Health consultation on car parking charges at hospitals.

If you haven't yet booked your place at this event, you can do so by contacting Becky by email becky@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 297050.

b) *'Quality Accounts' and LINKs*

From April 2010 a new system of assuring the public of the quality of their NHS will commence. It is to be called 'Quality Accounts' which will take the form of annual reports to the public on the quality of health care services. Prior to publication, LINKs will be given an opportunity to supply a statement to indicate whether it believes the reports are a fair reflection of the healthcare services provided. It is expected that the LINK will be given 30 days to prepare its statement. With NHS Trusts expected to publish in June, it is evident that the LINK will need to start preparing the process whereby LINK participants are enabled to play a full part in this process.

For the first year of this new system, it will only apply to the quality of acute healthcare services.

c) *LINK stalwarts battle on!*

In the last Bulletin we reported that the visits to Kent and Medway hospitals, as part of the LINK's cleanliness and hygiene project, were being extended to the end of January

KENT LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

10 February 2010 - Issue 22



a Local Involvement Network

because of the bad weather. Regrettably, the visits have been further delayed because of the 'winter vomiting virus' in some hospitals. We are now working to an end of February conclusion of the visits.

All LINK participants have been sent a questionnaire with this Bulletin in order to capture their views on cleanliness and hygiene in Kent and Medway's hospitals - that is, if they have had recent experience of being a patient or visiting someone in hospital. The questionnaire has been adjusted to include questions that have arisen from the preliminary laboratory findings from some of the initial visits.

d) *Joining up the dots!*

The list of LINK participants representing the LINK on various commissioning and provider groups is lengthening. Within this Bulletin the LINK is seeking representatives to sit on a Medicine Commissioning Group and other groups. Appointing someone to a group is not the end of the story; representatives have to be supported and enabled to report back to other interested LINK participants and to feed their comments back to the NHS or social care group concerned. The power and effectiveness of the LINK lies in these very activities which over time will empower and join up the various elements of the LINK.

Make sure that the interests you registered with the LINK when first joining are still up to date and relevant. Whilst we will always use this Bulletin to publicise these opportunities, we will specifically target LINK participants who we know to have an interest in the service area under review. For example, for the Gynaecology Services Improvement Group, we will be sending out personal invites to those participants that we know are interested in that particular service / topic area.

If you can't remember what topic or service area you put down when you first registered and the extent that you wanted to get involved, contact Becky by email becky@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 297050.

The full list of LINK representatives can be found on the LINK website – if you have an interest in any of the areas identified, please let us know and we will try to keep you informed and perhaps persuade you to get more involved.

e) *Kent County Council update on Dover Community Hospital*

LINK participant, Doug Tutton, has given evidence on the proposed siting of the new Dover Community Hospital. This was to the Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on 5 February 2010 – Doug's report can be found on the LINK's website at:

<http://www.thekentlink.org.uk/index.php?q=22>

On Friday, 19 February 2010 LINK representatives will be presenting evidence to the HOSC on the state of general dental services in Kent.



f) Still time left to comment on Hospital Car Parking Charges consultation

The Department of Health consultation is due to end on 23 February 2010.

Your views can be included in the joint LINK response by visiting <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KY2GNBH>

Alternatively you can send your comments direct to Michael Bellas, NHS Car Parking Consultation, Gateway Review and Estates and Facilities Division (GREFD), Department of Health, Room 3N13, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE.

For any queries or to request a paper version of the consultation document, email cpconsultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0113 254 5757.

g) Discussions / debates within the LINK

Why not take part in current online discussions that are taking place on the following topics:

- Pain services in Kent
- What's right and wrong about Foundation Trusts?
- Should complementary therapies be funded through taxation?

These discussions can be accessed via the 'Talkback' section of the LINK's website at: www.thekentlink.org.uk/index.php?q=9

h) Issues for the LINK

Issues brought to the LINK by its individual participants and participating organisations will be considered at the LINK's Priorities Panel meeting on Wednesday, 10 February 2010. The papers for this meeting can be seen on the LINK's website at: www.thekentlink.org.uk/index.php?q=693

For more information on any of the above news stories, contact Kent & Medway Networks on 01303 297050, email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or visit the Kent LINK website:

www.thekentlink.co.uk

2. Kent County Council - Directorate Involvement Groups (DIG)

Kent County Council (KCC) are establishing two groups to inform senior managers at Kent Adult Social Services (KASS) how to design and improve their services for people with a diverse range of disabilities.

Representatives from the East and West of the County will meet regularly with senior managers of KASS to discuss issues which affect their every day lives. The frequency of meeting dates will be established once the group is formed.

Interested participants will need sufficient time to read papers and prepare for these



meetings. Appropriate training and support will be given to ensure you are able to participate fully. Terms of reference are yet to be agreed for this group and KCC will reimburse out of pocket expenses.

The LINK representatives joining these groups will be required to feed back to the LINK and liaise with other interested LINK participants for which support would be given.

We would especially like to hear from LINK participants who have not yet had the opportunity to get involved with the work of the LINK to date.

For more information contact Clare Hunt, Kent County Council, Brenchley House, 123 - 125 Week Street, Maidstone, ME14 1RF, telephone 01622 696364, email clare.hunt@kent.gov.uk or visit the website: www.kent.gov.uk

3. LINK participants wanted for Medicine Commissioning Group

An opportunity has arisen for a LINK participant to join the Medicine Commissioning Group of NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent.

The group is being set up to develop a local prescribing strategy based on clinical and cost-effectiveness that takes into account available resources, local priorities, guidance from NICE and other national policies and engagement with patients and clinicians with the purpose of contributing to addressing health inequalities and improving health outcomes in NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent.

This opportunity is open to LINK participants who would like to participate in a multi-disciplinary group, have time to read papers and prepare for meetings. Initially meetings will be held monthly.

The Kent LINK would cover your expenses and NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent would provide the appropriate training and support to ensure you are able to participate fully.

The LINK representative would be expected to feed back to the LINK and liaise with other interested LINK participants for which support would be given.

We would especially like to hear from LINK participants who have not yet had the opportunity to get involved with the work of the LINK to date.

If you would like further information or to apply, contact Louise Murrell, LINK Development Worker East Kent, Kent & Medway Networks Ltd, Freepost NAT 17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR, telephone direct on 07976 596797 or leave a message on 01303 297050, email louise@kentlink.org or contact via the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk



4. NHS Evidence to recruit new members to independent Advisory Committee

NHS Evidence will be recruiting new members to its Advisory Committee. The committee is an independent committee of the Board of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and provides impartial accreditation recommendations to help identify, set and clarify standards and provide a quality assured evidence base for everyone in health and social care. This process ensures that all NHS staff have access to the best clinical and non-clinical evidence online to help them make informed decisions about patient care. Further details about the application process will appear on the NICE website shortly.

LINK representatives who would like to join this Board will be asked to feed back to the wider LINK and liaise with participants interested in the Advisory Committee for which support would be given.

We would especially like to hear from LINK participants who have not yet had the opportunity to get involved with the work of the LINK to date.

For more information contact the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, MidCity Place, 71 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6NA, telephone 0845 003 7780, email nice@nice.org.uk or visit the website: www.nice.org.uk

5. Patient Information Group

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services are looking for people with diverse communication needs, who would like to take part in a Patient Information Group.

You will receive information about the Group's work and will receive out of pocket expenses.

The main remit of the Patient Information Group will be to overview patient information produced by Community Services. The group will be responsible for checking that information has followed the correct approval process to ensure that patient information is easily understood, clear and accessible.

The Group will meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month, usually from 10.30am -12.30pm. The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 27 April 2010. The meeting venue will rotate, being held in Ashford, Dover or Sittingbourne.

The successful participant will need sufficient time to read papers and prepare for these meetings. Appropriate training and support will be given to ensure you are able to participate fully. Terms of reference are available for this Group.



The LINK representative joining this group will be expected to feed back to the LINK and liaise with other interested LINK participants for which support would be given.

We would especially like to hear from LINK participants who have not yet had the opportunity to get involved with the work of the LINK to date.

For more information contact Charlotte Wood, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services, Trinity House, Eureka Park, 110 / 120 Upper Pemberton, Kennington, Ashford, TN25 4AZ, email Charlotte.Wood@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk or telephone 01233 667817.

6. LINK participant wanted to support the Personal Health Budget Board

An opportunity has arisen for a LINK participant to join the Project Board for Personal Health Budgets, working with the NHS and Kent County Council.

The group will meet quarterly at Brook House, John Wilson Business Park, Reeves Way, Chestfield, Whitstable, CT5 3DD.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday, 2 March 2010 and each meeting will last for approximately two hours.

This opportunity is open to a LINK participant who has some experience of social care payments. The successful participant will need sufficient time to read papers and prepare for these meetings. The Project Board will cover expenses incurred and provide the appropriate training and support to ensure you are able to participate fully. Terms of reference are available for this group.

The LINK representative joining this group will be expected to feed back to the LINK and liaise with other interested LINK participants for which support would be given.

The Kent LINK would especially like to hear from LINK participants who have not yet had the opportunity to get involved with the work of the LINK to date.

If you would like to take part in this new initiative to personalise care, contact Georgina Walton, Eversley House, 19 Horn Street, Seabrook, Hythe, CT21 5SB, email georgina.walton@kent.gov.uk or telephone 01303 717029.

7. Support for people with chronic conditions

An issue has been raised with the LINK about support networks for people suffering from Crohn's Disease or Colitis.



There are Expert Patient Programmes available in Kent and Medway, including a six week (day time, once a week) generic programme that helps people to learn to control their condition. There are also programmes around specific issues and for carers. Courses are led by people who have chronic conditions themselves.

The office that covers Kent and Medway can be contacted on 0800 988 5520. The website of the national umbrella organisation is:
www.expertpatients.co.uk

There is also a Kent branch of the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC) and information can be found at:
www.groups.nacc.org.uk

The Association does not publish a local telephone number, but the national helpline can be contacted on 0845 130 2233.

For more information contact the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease, 4 Beaumont House, Sutton Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5HH, telephone 0845 130 2233 or 01727 844296, email info@nacc.org.uk or visit the website:
www.nacc.org.uk

8. New service for heart attack patients to be launched April 2010

Plans for a 24 / 7 Primary Angioplasty Service at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford were unveiled recently to the Health and Scrutiny Overview Committee (HOSC). The service, to ensure delivery of the most timely and effective intervention for heart attack patients, is set to be implemented by April 2010 and will replace the current thrombolysis treatment for the majority of cases.

For more information please use the following links:

Kent: <http://www.thekentlink.org.uk/index.php?q=1625>

Medway: <http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk/index.php?q=542>

You can contact the Kent Cardiovascular Network as follows:

- Geoff Wheat, Director, telephone 01622 711278 or email geoffrey.wheat@kentmedway.nhs.uk
- Corrine Stewart, Senior Service Improvement Project Manager, telephone 01622 711273 or email corrine.stewart1@kentmedway.nhs.uk
- Clare Boggia, Project Manager / Matron, telephone 07748 332811 or email Clare.boggia@ekht.nhs.uk



9. Help wanted – volunteers needed in Northfleet and Gravesend

Deaf and hard of hearing charity Hi Kent is looking for more volunteers from the Gravesend and Northfleet areas to help run hearing aid aftercare clinics.

If you would like more information or have time to help, contact Hi Kent by telephone 01622 691151, email enquiries@hikent.org.uk or visit the website: www.hikent.org.uk

10. Canterbury and District Voluntary Action and Support (CaDVAS) links with the LINK

CaDVAS has been formed by Canterbury and Herne Bay Volunteer Centre and Whitstable Volunteer Centre and is funded by Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council and NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent to provide infrastructure services to voluntary and community organisations across the Canterbury district.

You can now access their website via our 'Useful Links' webpage, just click on the CaDVAS heading next to their logo.

For more information contact Alex Krutnik, CaDVAS, Tower Works, Simmonds Road, Wincheap Business Park, Canterbury, CT1 3RA, telephone 01227 452381, email info@cadvas.org or visit the website: www.cadvas.org

11. Physiotherapy services in Swale

It was brought to the LINK's attention by Swale participants that there was some concern regarding a shortage of physiotherapy services within Swale, leading to long waits for treatment.

The LINK understands from NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent that they recognise there are shortcomings in the provision of physiotherapy services and are reviewing needs throughout East Kent in order to develop a commissioning plan for physiotherapy. The review will cover areas of concern raised by participants and include clinical input from GPs and physiotherapists.

The LINK will be maintaining a watching brief regarding this review and provide any further information in future issues of the Bulletin.

For further information contact Sophie Swain by email sophie@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427281.

12. Free courses for carers – 'Caring with Confidence'

The Kent Carers Consortium are offering a programme of a total of seven support



sessions aimed at anyone over 18 years old who is looking after a friend or relative, to make a positive difference to their life and the person they care for.

All of the sessions are free to attend, are three hours long and run once a week for seven weeks. Help may be available to those who need assistance with alternative care costs to enable them to attend. The group is keen to reach people who usually miss out on getting help or are just not aware of what is out there, or may indeed feel that they are not a carer.

Courses are planned for Ashford, Medway, Dartford, Dover, Swale and Tonbridge. Bookings are now being taken for these, with more planned for the rest of the county over the next two years.

For more information contact Helen Appleton, Kent Consortium, The Riverside Centre, Dickens Road, Gravesend, DA12 2JY, telephone 01474 369159, email helen.appleton@carerskent.org or visit the website: www.carerskent.org

13. Independence through the Voluntary Action of Kent's Elders (INVOKE)

Kent County Council in partnership with NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust was funded by the Department of Health Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP's) to support innovative early intervention and prevention services in East Kent. The funding received enabled the development of three new services:

- **Care Navigator** - support one to one contacts with persons, exploring the best resolution to their problem or needs, regardless of their eligibility to Kent Adult Social Services (KASS)
- **Community Information and Liaison Assistant (CILA)** - to develop district specific resources which are easily accessible in community hubs as well as maintaining an electronic directory - the 'Who can help me?' information directory
- **Community Matron Support Worker** - providing increased capacity to persons with long term conditions who are supported by the Community Matron Service.

Following the success of this pilot, all three services continue to be funded across East Kent. The Personalisation Agenda has led to a change as to how social care services are delivered, leading to the allocation of individual budgets to persons eligible for KASS services, support plans are assisted by case managers and brokers, when required for KASS clients.

Care Navigators skills have been extended to include support planning also, helping persons to purchase the services that support their requirements based on their personalised needs and the choices they have made.

The national evaluation report is now available via the link below along with a DVD



which reflects all the services offered across the 29 Local Authorities.

In Kent, the Community Matron Service was filmed as a scheme that reflected innovation and good practice with an example of Care Navigation services being offered by East Sussex County Council.

The local evaluation will be available shortly and relates to the direct learning in Kent based on the difference that the services made to service users, including their direct comments with regards to the services.

In the last edition of the Bulletin we published contact information for the CILAs. This has now been updated and can be found on the Kent LINK website at: <http://www.thekentlink.org.uk/index.php?q=1602>

The 'Who can help me?' information directory may be accessed at: www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/your_social_services/advice_and_guidance/services_in_east_kent.aspx

For more information contact Dawn Woodward, INVOKE Project Lead, St Peter's House, Ashford Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL, email dawn.woodward@kent.gov.uk or telephone 07717 852872.

14. A new website has been launched to help us live life well

A new website has been launched to help people live life well in Kent and Medway. The site focuses on improving mental wellbeing and has a wide range of practical tips for boosting happiness. The website may be accessed at: www.liveitwell.org.uk

They include the mental health equivalent of 'five a day' - five things to do to keep yourself in good shape and 'Dr Tim's 23 tips for becoming more happy'.

It also has information about local activities that people can join in with, advice on becoming more active and eating healthily and sets out the vision for mental health in Kent and Medway which has been developed in response to the views of people who use services locally.

The site which is hosted by Sevenoaks MIND was put together with ideas from a wide range of people from across Kent and Medway.

For more information contact Matt Willis, Head of Press and PR, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375270, email Matt.willis@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk



15. E-Kiosk information points

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services are testing touch screen E-Kiosk information points. This new initiative is designed to provide easy access to information for patients and staff about the services they provide.

These units are easy to use, enabling patients or staff members to search for a topic and either read or instantly print a relevant leaflet. The aim of the service is to make information more available and accessible to the community and to develop and increase the range of information in a variety of formats and languages.

The units are located at the Community Hospitals listed below:

- Deal Victoria Hospital, Outpatients Department and Minor Injuries Unit
- Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital, Outpatients Department
- Sheppey Community Hospital, Outpatients Department, Minster on Sea, Sheerness
- Herne Bay Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Outpatients Department and Rehab Unit.

For more information contact Peter Mahoney, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services, Trinity House, Eureka Park, 110 / 120 Upper Pemberton, Kennington, Ashford, TN25 4AZ email Peter.Mahoney@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk or telephone 01233 667814.

16. Post natal depression - peer support project

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent is setting up a new group for mums. They are inviting mums who have experienced post natal depression to join a new peer support project to help mums and their families suffering from it now.

The new project is a joint venture between NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Health Promotion, Family Action and Riverside Children's Centre in Canterbury and training is available for all volunteers.

If you think you are suffering from depression, visit your GP who will be able to refer you for specialist help.

For more information contact Mary Bullivant, Riverside Children's Centre, Kingsmead Road, Canterbury, CT2 7PH, telephone 01227 475551, email mary.bullivant@canterbury.gov.uk or visit the website: www.riverside.childrencentre.org



17. Healthy Schools Team visit to Maidstone Museum

The Healthy Schools Team is always looking at ways to enhance health related activities in schools in west Kent. Working collaboratively with community partners to optimise healthy living and reduce health inequalities is all part of World Class Commissioning. This is a good example of a small piece of work delivered by another agency which now links to NHS West Kent's priority of reducing childhood obesity.

A visit to Maidstone Museum was arranged to consult with the Learning and Access Team. The team offer a variety of educational activities to schools. This visit was designed to discuss and advise the contents of the teeth and bones module. Jane Kennedy, Healthy Schools Lead for Maidstone said: "This module is good vehicle to educate and promote healthy lifestyles in relation to reducing childhood obesity and dental disease amongst primary school children".

For more information about future Healthy School Visits contact Jane Kennedy, Farm Villa, Old Oakwood Site, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, ME16 9QQ, email Jane.kennedy@wkpct.nhs.uk or telephone 01622 723832.

18. Do you suffer from asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)?

NHS West Kent is undertaking a series of focus groups with people who have asthma / COPD and their carers. This will help identify issues and generate ideas about how to deliver a better service.

In December 2009 an initial focus group took place in Tonbridge for patients / carers with asthma / COPD and a questionnaire was distributed to NHS West Kent Health Network members.

There will be a further three focus groups throughout February and March for patients / carers with asthma / COPD to gain greater insight into current service provision as follows:

- 24 February 2010, Edenbridge - 10.00am - 12.00noon
- 26 February 2010, Maidstone - 10.00am - 12.00noon
- 2 March 2010, Gravesend - 10.00am - 12.00noon.

If you would like to attend one of these focus groups, contact Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375287, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk/Have_your_say



19. Developing Community Services for local people

Don't miss your chance to shape the future of Community Services in West Kent. The ambition of NHS West Kent is to ensure that all the people they serve enjoy the best possible health.

As the local Primary Care Trust, they wish to seek to effectively spend approximately £930m a year of NHS funding on commissioning health and care services for their population. A significant part of services are those delivered by a range of 'Community Services', these are services provided in, or close to, patient's homes.

Throughout February, NHS West Kent will be talking to the local population in order to inform and support the development of the strategy. The strategy aims to:

- improve the quality of community services by setting standards for high quality, measuring quality and by recognising and rewarding quality improvements
- develop a strategy that describes current and future needs and thus inform planning
- support the reshaping of provider organisations for community services to ensure they are capable of meeting future patient care needs and supporting staff to develop and improve their practice.

Those interested in getting involved in a focus group must apply by Friday, 12 February 2010.

For more information contact Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375287, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk/Have_your_say

20. NHS West Kent - free training

Have your say - NHS West Kent Primary Care Trust (PCT) are listening!

Each year NHS West Kent spends millions of pounds to make sure the people of West Kent enjoy the best possible health. The PCT would like you to have a say in what those services look like. To give you an opportunity to have your say, they are running a series of **FREE** training sessions to enhance your skills to influence decisions made about your health service.

The training will enable you to learn how the NHS works, make your contributions count and put your learning into practice. Each session will be run by an expert in the field.

The first is titled 'Engagement Foundation' and will take place on Thursday, 25 February 2010 at the Little Forest Children's Centre in Tunbridge Wells from 3.00pm to 5.00pm.



To get involved and take advantage of this excellent opportunity or for more information contact Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375287, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website:

www.westkentpct.nhs.uk/Have_your_say

21. NHS West Kent says: “Ladies protect yourself against cervical cancer”

Women in West Kent are being urged to protect themselves against cervical cancer by taking advantage of screening and vaccination. The call coincides with a campaign to raise awareness of the disease.

Dr Rachel Pudney, Senior Registrar in Public Health at NHS West Kent, said: “Cervical cancer is the second commonest cancer to affect women under the age of 35 years. In west Kent, about 30 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year, leading to around 10 premature deaths. Yet it is one of the few preventable cancers.”

Cervical screening is offered to 25 to 64 year-olds, while the HPV immunisation programme is offered to girls aged 12 to 18. To request a cervical screening contact your GP.

For more information contact Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or telephone 01732 375287.

22. Supporting the NHS Constitution

From 19 January 2010, all NHS organisations will be legally obliged to take account of the rights and pledges set out in the NHS Constitution published one year ago. It sets out patients’ rights to NHS services and safeguards the NHS for the future. Among other things, it gives patients the legal rights to:

- access NHS services
- drugs and treatments approved by NICE
- choice about where they receive their care
- be treated with dignity and respect.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham said: “This landmark document gives patients and staff real power to know what they can expect and what they can demand – demands that cannot go unchecked by the NHS from today”.

As well as patients, the Constitution also ensures that the NHS provides a high-quality working environment for its staff.



For more information contact Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or telephone 01732 375287.

23. The availability of health information to blind and partially sighted NHS users

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has commissioned research, conducted by Dr Foster Intelligence, to investigate the experiences of blind and partially sighted people who had used NHS services in the last 12 months. The study covered 600 blind and partially sighted people and 500 healthcare professionals in both primary and secondary care. The research has highlighted that barriers to health information remain widespread and that more progress needs to be made to ensure that health information is accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

If this is an issue which affects you, your family or friends, tell your LINK!

To receive a copy of the Dr Foster research report, contact Hugh Huddy, RNIB, Campaigns Team, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE, telephone 0207 391 2008, email hugh.huddy@rnib.org.uk or Campaigns@rnib.org.uk or visit the website: www.rnib.org

Please state which format you require: PDF or Word document by email, hardcopy in clear print or large print, Braille, audio on CD or MP3.

24. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) – ‘Essential Standards of Quality and Safety’

The CQC is an independent body set up by Government to make sure people in England receive better health and adult social care.

Beginning in April this year, the CQC are introducing a new system of regulation called the ‘Essential Standards of Quality and Safety’. The new standards bring important benefits to people who use services. The CQC are starting with independently regulating all NHS providers across the country. This will impact everyone in Kent and is bound to be of interest to LINK participants.

More details of the new system will be in the Kent LINK Bulletin in or around March 2010.

For more information, contact Heather Soderlind, Care Quality Commission, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TG, telephone 03000 616161, email www.cqc.org.uk or visit the website: enquiries@cqc.org.uk



Events

Please note that in accordance with the LINK's Governance, expenses are not reimbursable for attendance at the events shown below.

1. RADAR and the Appointments Commission – equipping and inspiring future leaders of the NHS

RADAR: The Disability Network and the Appointments Commission are running a seminar in early 2010 to support and equip people living with Ill health, Injury or Disability (IID) to successfully apply for Non Executive Director roles with their local NHS services – this could be with the Primary Care Trust, Ambulance Service Trust, Acute or Foundation NHS Trust or with the Strategic Health Authority.

The seminar will accommodate up to 20 people living with IID who are serious about wanting to play a paid role at Board level with one of their local NHS Trusts. There is no charge for attending.

The seminar will run from 10.00am to 4.00pm in Manchester on Monday, 1 March 2010.

If you are interested in attending or wish to find out more about this event, contact Nisha Patel, Events Assistant, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF, telephone 0207 503 6177, email Nisha.Patel@radar.org.uk or visit the website: www.radar.org.uk

2. Dementia Care Services

The Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust would like to invite you to discuss the new Care Planning Structure and its impact on Dementia Care Services.

The event will be held on Monday, 15 March from 11.00am to 2.30pm at the Education Centre, St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury, CT1 1TD.

For more information contact Nick Dent, St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury, CT1 1TD, freephone 0800 783 9972, telephone 01227 812020, email Nicholas.Dent@kmpt.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

Consultations

1. Kent LINK Hygiene Project questionnaire

Authorised Visitors of the Kent LINK have now visited almost all of the county's acute



hospital sites as part of this project to review hygiene procedures.

The next stage is to ask your experience of hospital hygiene. If you have visited or been a patient at one of our large hospitals, this is your opportunity to tell us your views on the cleanliness of the hospital you visited.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it by Monday, 1 March 2010 using the enclosed freepost envelope.

Alternatively, you can complete an online survey using the following link:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KY2GNBH>

If you have visited more than one hospital in the last 12 months, please complete a separate questionnaire for each hospital. Additional copies of the questionnaire may be obtained from the KMN office on 01303 297050.

For more information, contact Sophie Swain, Project Worker, Kent LINK, Unit 24 Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone Kent CT19 4RH, email sophie@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427281 / 01303 297050.

2. Personal Health Budget Team - focus group meeting

The Personal Health Budget Team would like to meet people from community groups and individuals. The group will discuss how they can best provide everyone with the chance to have a say about the proposed local health and social care services, personal health budgets scheme.

This pilot scheme is designed to make services more personalised, including patient choice, care planning and support for self care.

The first focus group meeting will be in the Tilmastone Room, Brook House, Reeves Way, Chestfield, Whitstable, CT5 3DD on 26 February 2010 from 10.00am - 11.30am. Refreshments will be available and expenses will be paid to those who wish to be involved.

If you would like to take part in this new initiative to personalise care, contact Georgina Walton, Eversley House, 19 Horn Street, Seabrook, Hythe, CT21 5SB, email georgina.walton@kent.gov.uk or telephone 01303 717029.

3. NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services - NHS Car Parking: Consultation on Improving Access for Patients

Would you like to have your say on car parking charges?



The charge for parking at NHS car parks is a highly emotive and significant issue for all patients, family, friends and staff across eastern and coastal Kent. On 29 December 2009, the Secretary of State for Health launched a national consultation on NHS Car Parking, consulting on improving access for patients. The consultation may be accessed at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_110557

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services would like to hear and gather a range of views of the understanding and acceptance of car parking charges within the NHS. These views will assist in developing a more consistent and fairer approach to car parking charges within the NHS that will be understood and accepted by patients and public everywhere. An online survey is available which takes about five to ten minutes to complete at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/2NX7Q75_

All contributions should be received by Tuesday, 16 February 2010.

Alternatively, the Strategic Health Authority will be delighted to record your views by email at consultation@southeastcoast.nhs.uk or contact Karen Edmunds, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services, Trinity House, Eureka Park, 110 / 120 Upper Pemberton, Kennington, Ashford, TN25 4AZ, telephone 01233 667816 or email karen.edmunds@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk

4. New pharmacy application - Deal

Assura Pharmacy Ltd has applied to open a new pharmacy at the junction of Golf Road and Cannon Street in Deal.

Any comments you may have on this application must be submitted to the Kent Primary Care Agency no later than 20 February 2010.

For more information contact Sheila Jeffery, Pharmacy Contracts Manager, Kent Primary Care Agency, 11 Station Road, Maidstone, ME14 1QH, telephone 01622 655133 or visit the website:

www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk/welcome/nhs-organisations/primary-care-agency/

5. Change of pharmacy ownership in Ashford

The Pharmaceutical Regulations Committee met on 2 December 2009. They considered and approved the change of ownership from the Waremass Group for Assura Pharmacy at St. Stephen's Health Centre, St. Stephen's Walk, Ashford.

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



6. Isle of Sheppey Cycle Routes Project

During February and March 2010 local people will be able to have their say on plans to develop new cycle routes in Sheerness and Leysdown. The project is the result of partnership working between Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council, with the support of Sustrans, the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

This project will result in around 18.5km of promoted cycle routes, parts of which will also be available to walk, and where possible it will be accessible for those with disabilities.

The consultation display will be in several locations throughout the consultation period.

- 1 - 17 February 2010 - Sheerness Library
- 19 February 2010 - Leysdown Village Hall (10.00am – 2.00pm)
- 25 February 2010 - Leysdown Village Hall (2.30pm – 5.00pm)
- 1 -5 March 2010 - Queenborough Library
- 8 - 12 March 2010 - Sheerness Leisure Centre / Healthy Living Centre

For more information contact Sharon Bayne, Chief Executive's Department, Kent County Council, 2nd Floor, Invicta House, Maidstone, ME14 1XX, telephone 07540 671271, email Sharon.Bayne@kent.gov.uk or visit the website: www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess

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 hours)