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LINK activities – find out more, get involved

To register your interest or to find out more about any of the activities listed here contact the Kent LINK office.

1. LINK Community Engagement Event: Tunbridge Wells

Meeting: Wednesday, 23 March 2011

The next Kent LINK Community Engagement Event is to be held on Wednesday, 23 March 2011 at The Camden Centre, Royal Victoria Place, Market Square, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2SW.

The Event starts at 10.00am with registration and networking opportunities. The Kent LINK formal meeting will start at 10.45am. The Event is scheduled to end at 3.00pm.

Refreshments and a buffet lunch will be provided.

The topic at this Event will be '**Changes in the NHS – What will it mean for YOU and your doctor?**' Three speakers have been booked to give their views and opinions about the forthcoming changes:

- Ann Sutton, Chief Executive, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent
- Dr Bob Bowes, a Tunbridge Wells GP
- Margaret Walker, a LINK participant who has acquired extensive experience in setting up Patient Participation Groups.

In the afternoon there will be an opportunity for people to discuss how the changes may affect them and what they can do to help ensure these developments work in patients' best interests.

Places are limited so please book your place in advance. Please advise of any special or dietary requirements at the time of booking.

In accordance with the LINK's Governance, expenses are not reimbursable from the LINK for attendance at this event.

To book your place or for more information, contact Becky Alvey, KMN, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, email becky@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 297050.

2. LINK participant expenses

Action by: Wednesday, 16 March 2011

In order to comply with the LINK's year end financial requirements, could all participants with qualifying expenses ensure that these are sent to the KMN office, together with supporting receipts, by Wednesday, 16 March 2011 for processing.

If you require an expense claim form contact the KMN office by email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 297050.

For more information contact Erika Collison, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, email erika@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 297050.

3. Priorities Panel – latest issues

Action by: Friday, 25 March 2011

The following issues have been raised with the Kent LINK:

1. Concern about inadequate public transport to the new Pembury Hospital and inadequate car parking spaces.
2. Alleged delays in administering adequate pain relief and long delays prior to discharge whilst waiting for suitably trained staff to sign paperwork.
3. Alleged lack of care in hospital for patient with Parkinson's disease, issues of cleanliness, timing of medication and discharge.
4. Fibromyalgia diagnosis. It is said that several patients with a diagnosis of Fibromyalgia are being refused assistance by a GP in East Kent. This is said to impact on their ability to get benefits, physiotherapy and pain control.
5. Following the recent Ombudsman's report, the Panel has considered representations that the LINK should institute regular visits to care homes and hospitals using its 'enter and view' powers.
6. Community physiotherapy in West Kent. Alleged problems with orthotic appliances, substandard insoles and six month wait for correct ones.

If you have experience of any of these issues which you would like to share, or if you would like to make a comment on the action that should be taken by the LINK, contact Deborah Gibbons by email deborah@kentlink.org or telephone 07875 286999 / 01303 297050.

4. Cervical Screening Uptake Project – West Kent

LINK Project Update

The Cervical Screening Uptake in West Kent Project Group has been working with Canterbury Christ Church University to investigate barriers to cervical screening for young women in West Kent. Pockets of West Kent have low levels of screening uptake especially in the age range of 25 - 30 years. The Project Group will soon be compiling a report of its findings, and this will be available on the Kent LINK website. However, if you would like to assist in preparing the report there is still time to become involved.

If you would like to be part of the Project Group contact Heather Wells, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email heather@kentlink.org or visit the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

5. Patient Experience of Outpatient Clinics Project

LINK Project Update

The Kent LINK is currently running a project investigating patient experience in outpatient clinics. Kent LINK's Authorised Visitors will be attending outpatient clinics across Kent to speak to patients and distribute questionnaires. The final report will be available on the Kent LINK website or in hard copy format, if requested.

For more information contact Heather Wells, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email heather@kentlink.org or visit the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

6. Monitoring Standards in Care Homes Project

LINK Project Update

The Kent LINK is working with Kent County Council and the East Kent Older Persons Forums looking at standards of care homes in East Kent. Authorised Visitors will be visiting care homes across East Kent and carrying out observations. The final report will be shared with the care homes and published on the Kent LINK website. Hard copies of the report will be available on request.

For more information contact Heather Wells, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email heather@kentlink.org or visit the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

Further enquiries relating to the above information can be addressed to Kent LINK, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Business Park, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, email info@kentlink.org or telephone 01303 297050.

Notices – for action or information

If you are interested in any of the subjects covered in this section of the Bulletin, please contact the agencies listed directly.

1. NHS West Kent publishes draft Operating Plan for 2011 / 2012

Information

These annual Operating Plans focus on what NHS organisations must do in 2011 / 2012 to prepare for the transition to GP commissioning. NHS West Kent's draft plan affirms that it will continue to work on delivering its Strategic Commissioning Plan and will continue to focus on delivery of its Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention programmes already in place.

This Operating Plan is confirmation that existing plans will continue during this time of major structural change for the NHS. It is also clear that the new GP Consortia have co-developed and reviewed these plans. The draft plan states that previously agreed strategic objectives continue to apply – to improve the health of the population of West Kent whilst controlling growth and spend.

For more information contact Emma Cain, Community Involvement Manager, 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

2. Pharmacy application: Maidstone

Update

The Pharmaceutical Regulations Committee met on 9 February 2011 to consider the following applications:

- 1) Lloyds Pharmacy Ltd's preliminary consent 'minor' relocation over 500 metres to relocate their pharmacy from 58 - 60 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone to The New Health Centre Development, 1 Bower Mount, Maidstone.
- 2) Lloyds Pharmacy Ltd's preliminary consent relocation to relocate their pharmacy from 58 - 60 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone to The New Health Centre Development, 1 Bower Mount, Maidstone.

The committee **refused** application 1, as it did not meet all the requirements of Regulation 6(1).

The committee **approved** application 2 to secure adequate pharmaceutical services within the neighbourhood.

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

3. Pharmacy application: Northfleet

Update

The Pharmaceutical Regulations Committee met on 10 December 2010 and **agreed** to approve the application of Ackers Chemists Ltd to open a new pharmacy at The New Primary Care Centre in Vale Road, Northfleet.

The successful applicant was one of four applications considered by the Committee.

Amongst other matters, this decision took into account the need to give consumers choice of provider and the location of current pharmacies in the area.

For more information contact Linda Gibbs, Kent Primary Care Agency, 11 Station Road, Maidstone, ME14 1QH, telephone 01622 655134, email Linda.gibbs@nhs.net or visit the website: www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk

4. Ovarian cancer: the 'silent cancer' – know the signs

Information

Did you know that as many as 50 percent of women incorrectly believe that screening for cervical cancer (a smear test) also picks up signs of ovarian cancer? That's according to new research by the Eve Appeal – the charity which organises Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month which takes place this March.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer among women in the UK after breast, lung, bowel and womb cancer. It causes more deaths than all the gynaecological cancers put together – of the 6,600 women diagnosed each year with ovarian cancer, sadly 4,400 are diagnosed too late for treatment to be effective.

Ovarian cancer is often known as the ‘silent cancer’ because its symptoms are so vague they can easily be confused with other more common, less serious health problems. This means the disease is often at a late stage by the time the patient presents.

There are three key signs which tend to be more common among women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. These are persistent pelvic and abdominal pain, increased abdominal size / persistent bloating (not bloating that comes and goes) and difficulty eating and feeling full quickly.

What causes ovarian cancer is still not known but it is believed that the number of eggs released by the ovaries could have an impact, or it could be genetic. Ovarian cancer is more common among women who have gone through the menopause (typically over the age of 45) but it can affect women of any age.

It’s important to remember that if you’re experiencing any of the symptoms, it’s more likely to not be cancer but you should seek medical advice. The earlier the diagnosis, the more effective the treatment.

To find out more about ovarian cancer, visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer-of-the-ovary

For more information contact Martine Saker, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, Windmill Road, Gillingham, ME7 5NY, email Martine.Saker@medway.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 825292.

5. MPs to hold General Medical Council to account

Information

The Health Committee plans to expand its role by taking on the role of holding the General Medical Council (GMC) to account. The move comes after the Health Committee chair stated that the Committee would also re-establish the principle of Parliamentary accountability over NHS spending.

The GMC is currently formally accountable to the Privy Council, but the Health Committee’s report states that: “In the absence of a mechanism which makes this accountability effective they intend to exercise this function on behalf of Parliament.”

The Committee will invite the GMC to give oral evidence on its annual report each year and it plans to continue to investigate the revalidation process.

The broader report is on the proposals for doctor revalidation. Revalidation would mean that doctors’ positions on the medical register would regularly be assessed; whereas at present they remain on it unless concerns are actively raised.

The current proposal is for annual appraisals of doctors by their employers to continue, but for a local responsible officer to confirm fitness to practice every five years.

It is proposed that responsible officers will be the medical directors of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) or NHS trusts. Since PCTs are set to be abolished, the report said there needs to be clarity about where they will be situated in the future.

For the purposes of the GMC, the principle remains unchanged.

The development of a system for revalidation began in 2000. While the Committee recognised that the delays have been for good reasons, it asked that there be no further delays between now and the implementation date of 2012.

The Committee said that too little attention had been given to how doctors whose practice gives cause for concern will be dealt with and said clear guidance must be published for the responsible officers.

The report also said that the Committee expects the GMC to regulate whether doctors from elsewhere in the EU have good enough English to communicate with patients. The Committee highlights that currently the GMC cannot check whether doctors from the EU are able to speak English so they can practise safely.

6. Health Service Ombudsman report into NHS care of older people

Information

The Health Service Ombudsman has released a report into the care of older people in the NHS, which was picked up by several national newspapers.

The report recounts in fine detail the treatment of 10 elderly people whose cases were the subject of official complaints to the Ombudsman, Ann Abraham.

The Ombudsman says the report highlights the difference between the “principles and values of the NHS Constitution” and the reality of care for older people in the NHS in England.

A copy of the report can be found at: www.ombudsman.org.uk/care-and-compassion

For more information contact Becky Barraclough, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email rebecca@kentlink.org or visit the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

7. New tools to improve care

Information

The Department of Health, in collaboration with Expert Patients Programme Community Interest Company, have developed a new tool to help make the local business case for self care education. This analysis tool allows the published findings to be calculated for given GP practices, Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities or GP commissioning pathfinders with their own characteristics in terms of current service levels, prevalence of the long term condition and costs.

This information is available at: www.selfmanagement.co.uk/self-care-resources

The Department has produced a series of information sheets for doctors, nurses, those delivering personal health budgets, allied health professionals, health trainers and anyone supporting individuals with long term conditions. The information sheets cover a range of topics including care planning, care co-ordination, managing need and assessment of risk, motivating people to self care, goal setting and action planning and end of life care

These are available on the Department of Health website in the publications section.

For more information contact Becky Barraclough, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email rebecca@kentlink.org or visit the website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

8. National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2010

Information

You can now access trust level reports on the 2010 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey at: www.quality-health.co.uk/cancer-reports#7

There are 158 reports available, listed under the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in which the trust is located.

The Cancer Patient Experience survey was funded and organised by the Department of Health and the methodology and survey content was overseen and approved by them. The survey programme is under the overall direction of Professor Sir Mike Richards, CBE.

For more information contact Becky Barraclough, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, telephone 01303 297050, email rebecca@kentlink.org or visit the Kent LINK website: www.thekentlink.co.uk

Expenses

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

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@kentlink.org

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm

(Answerphone available out of hours)