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*The second edition of
Kent LINK into Local HealthWatch
is enclosed with this Bulletin.*

*This Newsletter is published monthly
and will update you on what is happening
around the development of HealthWatch,
both locally in Kent and nationally.*

*If you want to get more involved in
this exciting development, please read
the Newsletter where contact details
are available.*

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 (details on the back page).

1. Kent LINK Community Engagement Event – 4 October 2011

Date for your diary

The LINK is pleased to be hosting a Community Engagement Event in Sittingbourne on Tuesday, 4 October 2011 at UK Paper Leisure Club, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, ME10 4DE at 10.00am to publish the findings of the recent Mental Health Report.

Both Experts by Experience and carers are invited to attend this meeting, to give their views on how the Kent LINK can support Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust to invest in services and make improvements for the people who use those services.

If you would like to book a place at this Event, contact Sylvia at the Kent LINK, email sylvia@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 298385 / 01303 297050.

For more information, contact the LINK.

LINK Contact:

Name: Cate Boland

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07976 596709

Email: cate@kentlink.org

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2. Kent LINK Public Meeting: Proposed Integration of Medway Maritime and Darent Valley hospitals' trusts

Date for your diary!

The proposed integration of Medway Maritime and Darent Valley hospitals' trusts is now being considered by both NHS hospital trusts.

The Kent LINK has received assurances that Accident and Emergency and Maternity Services will be retained on both hospital sites.

The Kent LINK is now seeking firm assurances that a full range of services will be protected on both sites. The LINK will be consulting with both Kent and Medway residents about their concerns on this subject.

The Kent LINK is holding a public meeting on **Wednesday, 19 October 2011 at 5.30pm at Fleet Leisure Centre, Nelson Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, DA11 7EE** where the public will be invited to hear from members of the Integration Teams from both hospitals about the proposed integration.

The latest update on the proposed integration from Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust can be found on page 8 of this Bulletin.

If you would like to book a place at this Event, contact Sylvia at the Kent LINK by email sylvia@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01303 298385 / 01303 297050.

LINK Contact:

Name: Clive Brock

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07976 596410

Email: clive@kentlink.org

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3. Kent LINK Projects – update

Equality and Diversity Project

In March 2010, it was agreed by the Kent LINK Governors' Group to concentrate on a focused approach to engage more actively with people that are rarely asked to comment on the services they receive. After a successful series of four workshops, an action plan and objectives were produced. As well as embedding equality, diversity, respect and dignity into the LINK's agenda, a series of 12 workshops will be delivered to specific communities for their views of health and social care. Two workshops have already been held for people who are homeless and people who have high support needs.

The continuation of this project is dependent upon the role of Community Ambassadors. See the next item for further information on Community Ambassadors.

Community Ambassadors

To help the Kent LINK ensure that it seeks the views of **all** communities and establishes a wide ranging network of local people and local communities in readiness for Local HealthWatch, it is embarking on this exciting new project. Volunteers will be trained to become Community Ambassadors to:

- Provide their community with a direct line to the LINK – improve two way flow of communications
- Provide those communities with more opportunities for raise issues and influence decisions.

If you want to become a Community Ambassador or want to know more, contact Louise Murrell by email louise@kentlink.org or telephone 01303 297050 / 07976 596913.

Youth Project

The LINK is now engaging with Young People on a regular basis. This is done by holding young people's engagement events, going into schools / colleges and engaging with them digitally. The Kent LINK (and in future, Local HealthWatch) is in a unique position to offer children and young people a direct way to influence and use services in line with the Achieving Equity and Excellence for Children White Paper. By involving children and young people in the transition from LINK to HealthWatch, we can ensure that Local HealthWatch takes into account their needs too.

Mental Health Network

The findings of the Kent and Medway LINK Mental Health Report will be published at the Community Engagement Event to be held in Sittingbourne on Tuesday, 4 October 2011. The Report suggests where investments could be made to services. These recommendations have been incorporated into the LINK's action plan which shows how LINK participants, commissioners, service providers and existing local groups will work together to seek improvements.

NHS Quality Accounts Annual Reports to the Public

Every year the Kent LINK is asked to provide a commentary for NHS Trust Quality Accounts. These Quality Accounts present information to the public on local hospital trusts with regard to quality of service provision. They are aimed at the general public, and intend to provide individuals with information in order to aid patient choice. The LINK will be gathering patient experience data throughout the coming year to provide informed commentaries for the 2011 / 2012 Quality Accounts. The planned pattern of engagement includes questionnaires, online surveys, focus groups and site visits to hospitals. Patient experience data collected from other projects and online forums will also be used to inform the commentaries. You can find out more from the Kent LINK website or by contacting Heather Wells at the Kent LINK Office (see page 13 for contact details).

Hygiene, Disinfection and Patient Experience in Hospitals Project

In spring 2011, the Kent and Medway LINKs worked in partnership with NHS Trusts in Kent to examine aspects of cleanliness in hospitals. The LINKs used their ability to 'enter and view' during March and April 2011 to visit all acute hospitals in Kent.

The LINK's Authorised Visitors viewed four elements of hospital hygiene and the aim was to investigate the level of hygiene in Kent hospitals within and around ward areas. Observations were made and recorded as follows:

- Cleanliness of commodes that have been cleaned
- Correct use of colour coded cleaning materials including the store cupboards
- Hand hygiene at point of patient contact
- Swabbing of selected surfaces in ward areas.

Supervision and Training of Care Assistants

This project involves contacting all the care agencies working to assist people to remain in their own homes. Working with Kent County Council (who have already carried out a survey to find out what people in receipt of services think of the assistance they are getting), this project aims to complete the picture of support given to vulnerable and often isolated people by getting a better understanding of how employment policies and practices affect the continuity and standard of support given. This project is therefore key in helping to understand how effective 'care in the community' is at assisting people to retain their independence.

Cervical Screening Uptake in West Kent

The Kent LINK has worked with Canterbury Christ Church University to research the reasons why pockets of West Kent have low levels of cervical screening uptake for young women aged 25 – 29 years old. The results of the research are due to be published shortly and the final report will include recommendations for local NHS Trusts.

Patient Experience in Outpatient Clinics across Kent

The Kent LINK has used its Authorised Visitors in order to gather information on patient experience in Outpatient Clinics. Authorised Visitors attended a selection of Outpatient Clinics across the county in order to distribute questionnaires, speak to patients and staff and to make observations. The data collected by this project is currently being analysed and will be published in a final project report in the next few weeks.

Monitoring Quality of Residential Homes in East Kent

Kent LINK Authorised Visitors carried out visits to 36 care homes across East Kent during

August 2011, to observe and monitor the quality of care home environments. The Authorised Visitors were pleased overall with the quality of care homes. A report will be published and sent to the Care Quality Commission and Kent County Council in the autumn. The report will include recommendations, where appropriate, to both Kent County Council and the care homes visited.

LINK Contact:

Name: Heather Wells

Telephone: 01303 297050

Email: heather@kmn-ltd.co.uk

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4. 084 premium rate telephone numbers for GP surgeries

Information

The Kent LINK Priorities Panel has recently been investigating the use of premium rate telephone numbers in GP surgeries throughout Kent.

In a recent review, undertaken by NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent (ECK), of surgeries using non geographic telephone numbers, all practices were asked to provide evidence that patients were not being charged more than a local call when ringing their surgery. Responses received from all practices supported the permitted use of the 084 number.

The NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent 084 factsheet is available to view on the Kent LINK website:

http://www.thekentlink.co.uk/assets/files/Bulletins/Bulletin_Documents_2011/070_0844_FACTSHEET.pdf

The LINK continues to hear patients' concerns about the use of 084 numbers and will continue to raise them with the relevant bodies.

LINK Contact:

Name: Steph Moir

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07875 260742

Email: steph@kmn-ltd.co.uk

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5. Kent LINK Governors' Group – meeting dates

Date for your diary

Governors' Group meetings are open to the public to observe the process. The next meeting is scheduled for:

- Wednesday, 19 October 2011 from 10.00am to 1.00pm
Lenham Community Centre, Osborne Room, Groom Way, Lenham, ME17 2QT.

All previous Governors' Group meeting papers are available to view on the Kent LINK website: www.thekentlink.co.uk/kent-link-governors-group.html

The agenda for future meetings will be available on the Kent LINK website one week prior to the meeting date.

Please note that expenses cannot be claimed for attendance at these meetings in accordance with Kent LINK Governance.

LINK Contact:

Name: Steph Moir

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07875 260724

Email: steph@kmn-ltd.co.uk

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6. Kent LINK Priorities Panel – issues update

Issues and date for your diary

A meeting was held on 7 September 2011 to discuss issues raised with the LINK. As well as looking at the use of the 084 numbers, the Panel reviewed progress on issues around:

- Transport to Pembury Hospital
- Closure of Scarborough Ward
- Cutbacks in the IVF service
- Surgeries charging for letters for GP agreement
- Delays for patients attending Channel Day Surgical Centre.

If you have experiences of any issues listed above or any about health / social care services which you would like to share, or if you would like to make a comment as to what action should be taken by the LINK, please contact us.

Priorities Panel meetings are open to the public to observe the process. The next meeting is scheduled for:

- Wednesday, 5 October 2011 from 1.00pm to 3.30pm
Salvation Army Centre, 74 – 80 Union Street, Maidstone, ME14 1ED.

All previous Priorities Panel meeting papers are available to view on the Kent LINK website: <http://www.thekentlink.co.uk/priorities-panel.htm>

The agenda for future meetings will be available on the website one week prior to the meeting date.

Please note that expenses cannot be claimed for attendance at these meetings in accordance with Kent LINK Governance.

LINK Contact:

Name: Steph Moir

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07875 260724

Email: steph@kmn-ltd.co.uk

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Further enquiries relating to the above information should be addressed to the 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. Proposed Integration of Dartford and Gravesham and Medway Trusts

Update

Please see below the latest update on the proposed integration of two Trusts, Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust.

“Following our last update in August on the proposed integration between Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust and Medway NHS Foundation Trust, our joint Transition Team are now coming to the end of feasibility testing. During this we have been examining whether joining the two trusts together would result in real benefits for patients, local communities and staff.

The results of the work so far will be presented to both trust boards at the end of September. The trust boards will then decide whether to continue with the journey towards integration, or not. If they agree to proceed, this is just the first milestone of many before the two trusts could become one organisation in summer 2012.

Should both trust boards decide to proceed, we are planning a programme of public engagement, to take place over the coming autumn and winter months. Both boards will also be listening to the views of our Governors, who represent over 21,500 public and staff trust members.

One of the key reasons we are considering bringing the two trusts together is to improve the range and quality of services available to local people, not to reduce them. Both hospitals, Darent Valley Hospital and Medway Maritime Hospital, will continue to offer full A&E, maternity, children’s and outpatients services and keep their names. We are also committed to maintaining the quality of frontline clinical staffing and services.

We look forward to working with the LINKs in the near future on public and patient engagement and would like to thank them for their assistance thus far in involving local people.

If you would like any further information, please visit the trusts’ websites www.medway.nhs.uk and www.dvh.nhs.uk

Or if you have any questions or comments, contact us by:

Email: bettercaretogether@nhs.net

Telephone: 01634 830000 x6746

**Mark Devlin and Susan Acott
Chief Executives of Medway NHS Foundation Trust
and Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust”**

LINK Contact:

Name: Clive Brock

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07976 596410

Email: clive@kentlink.org

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2. Merged: Swanscombe Health Centre and Bean Village Surgery

Information

NHS West Kent has confirmed that Swanscombe Health Centre and Bean Village Surgery have merged.

Patients eligible for dispensing status will have to be registered at the Bean branch because the merged practice is not permitted to dispense prescriptions from Swanscombe Health Centre.

For more information visit the website: <http://www.gpsrus.org/index.aspx> or contact the surgeries direct:

- Swanscombe Health Centre, Southfleet Road, Swanscombe, DA10 0BF, telephone 01322 427447
- Bean Village Surgery, High Street, Bean, DA2 8BS, telephone 01474 707236.

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3. Lloyds Pharmacy application – Westwood Cross, Broadstairs

Update

The Pharmaceutical Committee have considered and approved Lloyds Pharmacy's application to open a pharmacy at Westwood Cross as it met the requirements of regulation (13(1) (a).

For more information, contact Claire Davison, Kent Primary Care Agency, Faith House, 2 St Faiths Street, Maidstone, ME14 1LL, email Kent-pca.pharmacy@nhs.net or telephone 01622 655127.

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4. Action on Hearing Loss

Update

In June 2011, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (commonly known as RNID) changed its name to Action on Hearing Loss.

For more information contact Action on Hearing Loss, telephone 0808 808 0123, textphone 0808 808 9000, email informationline@hearingloss.org.uk or visit the website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/

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5. Expert Patients Programme

Get involved!

The Expert Patients Programme, co-ordinated by Kent Community Health NHS Trust, is soon to be expanded into the west of Kent.

Expert Patients Programme is a course for people living with a long-term health condition, and it aims to help them take more control of their lives by learning new skills to manage their condition on a daily basis. It is led by trained tutors who themselves live with a long-term condition. Each session lasts 2½ hours including a coffee break.

The free six week course includes:

- Dealing with pain and extreme tiredness
- Coping with feelings of depression
- Relaxation techniques and exercise
- Healthy eating
- Communicating with family, friends and health professionals
- Planning for the future.

A course will be delivered in Tonbridge, starting on Monday, 7 November 2011 and each consecutive week for six weeks.

For more information or to book your place, contact Clare Doran, Kent Community Health NHS Trust, Trinity House, 110/120 Upper Pemberton, Kennington, Ashford, TN25 4AZ, telephone 01233 667810, email Claire.Doran@kentcht.nhs.uk or visit the website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b1YFzeQtFs>

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6. End of Life Care Conference

Get involved!

This conference follows on from the success of last year's launch event and is an opportunity for participants to hear about the progress made in key areas since then. It is also an opportunity for people who are interested in improving services for those at the end of their lives to have a chance to influence the priorities for attention in the coming year.

End of Life Care Conference will look at the big discussion ... a year on. The conference will be held on Thursday, 6 October 2011 from 10.00am to 3.00pm with lunch provided at The Hop Farm, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, TN12 6PY.

For more information contact Ferne Haxby, NHS Kent and Medway, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375200, email Ferne.haxby@wkpct.nhs.net or visit the website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

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7. Third Annual Voluntary and Community Sector Conference

Get involved!

Voluntary Action Maidstone will be hosting its next conference on Friday, 14 October 2011 from 9.30am to 3.00pm at Maidstone Support Centre, Marsham Street, Maidstone, ME14 1HH. The Keynote Speaker will be Rob Jackson, international writer and speaker on volunteering. A fee of £10.00 is payable and lunch will be provided.

For more information or to book your place contact, Sue Morbi, Maidstone Support Centre, Marsham Street, Maidstone, ME14 1HH, email Sue.morbi@vam-online.org.uk or telephone 01622 677337.

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8. Care Quality Commission completes review of Castlebeck Care Group facilities

Information

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has completed its review of facilities owned by the Castlebeck Care Group, following the discovery of serious abuse at Winterbourne View.

The CQC carried out unannounced visits and found over 10 facilities were not meeting Government standards.

You can find out more about this review on the CQC website:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/newsandevents/castlebeck.cfm>

For more information contact the Care Quality Commission, CQC National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA, email enquiries@cqc.org.uk or telephone 03000 616161.

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9. Care Quality Commission's role in Southern Cross

Information

The transfer of care homes run by Southern Cross to new providers has caused concern over continuity of care. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is working with Southern Cross and the new providers to ensure that essential standards are met.

You can find out more information on the CQC website:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/newsandevents/newsletter/southerncross.cfm>

For more information contact the Care Quality Commission, CQC National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA, email enquiries@cqc.org.uk or telephone 03000 616161.

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10. Right to Provide

Information

Announced in March 2011, the Right to Provide (R2P) builds on the Government's commitment to give public sector workers new rights to provide services through staff-led enterprises. NHS and social care staff can request the opportunity to manage the services or care pathways they currently deliver with the greater freedom and independence that comes from 'spinning out' of the NHS and setting up their own organisation.

This policy builds on the Right to Request scheme. From 2008 to 2011, almost 25,000 NHS staff will have moved into social enterprises and have consequently taken over the community services they provide, delivering tangible benefits to patients, staff and their supporting host organisations.

The Department of Health offers comprehensive guidance on the Right to Provide policy and links to other resources on the website which may be accessed at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_125578

The Department of Health will also be happy to discuss any queries you might have. If you need help or advice, contact Customer Service Centre, Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, email socialenterprise@dh.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7210 4850.

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11. Protecting vulnerable people from fire

Date for your diary

An information day with Kent Fire and Rescue Service will be held on Tuesday, 18 October 2011 at Maidstone Fire Station, Loose Road Maidstone, ME15 9QB.

Through their work in the community, they have developed a better understanding of the risks faced by vulnerable people. They are holding a free event for those responsible for the construction or management of homes built for this group and would like to invite you and your colleagues to join them.

The event will start at 10.30am and include supplier trade stands, presentations and a number of live fire demonstrations. Lunch will be provided and the day will finish at 3.00pm.

For more information contact Stuart Skilton, Group Manager, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Maidstone Fire Station, Loose Road, Maidstone, ME15 9QB, email stuart.skilton@kent.fire-uk.org or telephone 01622 698362 / 07730 542007.

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Consultations - have your say

1. New pharmacy application – Dover

Consultation: Response by Friday, 7 October 2011

An application for a new pharmacy in Folkestone Road, Dover has been received.

If you would like the Kent LINK to make comments on this application, contact Louise Murrell by Friday, 7 October 2011.

Comments on this application must be submitted to the Kent Primary Care Agency by Sunday, 16 October 2011.

A copy of the application and map is available upon request from the Kent LINK.

LINK Contact:

Name: Louise Murrell

Telephone: 01303 297050 / 07976 596913

Email: louise@kentlink.org

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2. Philbeach Older People's Day Centre – closure consultation

Consultation: Response by Sunday, 6 November 2011

This day centre service run by Kent County Council (KCC) from Philbeach Nursing Home is under review. Take up of this service is low possibly due to the venue and the hilly nature of the site which also restricts opportunities for stimulation or variety of activities. KCC do not think this service is value for money and are therefore consulting on de-commissioning it.

Formal consultation with service users and staff has begun but comments from the wider

public are invited before the consultation ends on Sunday, 6 November 2011.

For more information contact the Efficiency Team, Kent County Council, Families and Social Care, 3rd Floor, Brenchley House, 123-135 Week Street, Maidstone, ME14 1RF email efficiencyteambx@kent.gov.uk or telephone 08458 247247.

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Expenses

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

If you are attending a LINK Event and are able to offer transport to another attendee it would be greatly appreciated. The LINK is unable to accept any responsibility or liability for such an arrangement, but it will act as a facilitator to pass on details. Please contact us for further information.

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

(Answer phone available out of hours)

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this publication and enclosed documents, neither the Kent LINK, Kent & Medway Networks Ltd, nor its employees, can be held responsible for any errors or omissions that may have occurred in the preparation of this Bulletin.

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