



Stop Press!

1. Kent LINK becomes legal

At its inaugural meeting on 3 December 2008 (see below) the Kent LINK became a legal entity and the transitional phase of its development came to an end. With this Bulletin LINK participants will receive information on how they can start to get involved in the LINK, such as how to:

- **raise an issue** and make a difference
- **make contact with other LINK participants** with similar interests
- **get more actively involved** in such activities as a LINK visitor or mystery shopper
- **make a contribution to the LINK's work programme**, and, if they are a participating community and voluntary sector organisation
- **make a bid for LINK project money**
- seek to **represent the LINK** on a commissioning or service provider decision making group

If you or a community group you are involved with have not yet become a LINK participant, don't delay – join today through:

- the Kent LINK website: www.thekentlink.co.uk
- Email: info@kmn-ltd.co.uk
- Tel: 01303 297050
- SMS Text: 07976 596913

Potentially, 1.4 million people in Kent can become LINK participants – getting involved at any level they feel comfortable with – dipping in when things interest them or just being kept informed when they have less interest.

To know what is going on and to exert some influence in the way health and social care services are delivered, why not use the Local Involvement Network and benefit from the powers and resources at its disposal?

2. LINK's first work programme

The LINK's first embryonic work programme is about to go out to consultation to LINK participants – this first draft is based on the legacy of issues handed over from the former Patient and Public Involvement Forums and from issues raised by LINK participants - comprising individuals and voluntary sector organisations. It will cover the period to the LINK's annual meeting in May 2009, when it will be reviewed.

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3. Health check of Kent's health service

Every year the Healthcare Commission require NHS organisations to self declare whether they have met the 24 required core national standards, which includes such things as patient safety, cleanliness, privacy and dignity, etc. The LINK will be working with community groups who have signed up as LINK participants to provide an independent / external commentary from the community of Kent as to whether their local NHS providers are meeting the required standards. The health check will cover the period April 2008 to March 2009.

The LINK will be presenting oral evidence to the February and March meetings of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (see dates in the events section of the bulletin) of the Kent County Council on any evidence it has received regarding those standards relating to the cleanliness of health provider services. ***If you have an interest in this area of health care please let us know of your experience over the past year.***

If you belong to a community group that is interested in taking part in helping the LINK to check on the standard of a provider service with which they have an interest, please contact us through our website or by emailing info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or by telephone on 01303 297050

4. Going, going.....!

Time is running out to have your say on some important issues which feature on the LINK's website and which are featured in this bulletin:

- The future of GPs' dispensing rights in and around the Tenterden area (including Cranbrook, Staplehurst, Hawkhurst, Headcorn, parts of Ashford and Ham Street – ***consultation ends 20 January 2009***
- Debates within the LINK on:
 - whether the NHS should fund alternative / complementary therapy – ***discussion ends 31 January 2009***
 - influencing impending Government legislation on transforming adult social care and the likely impact on the future of day care services - ***discussion ends 31 January 2009***
 - influencing government guidance on the arrangements for patients to top up their NHS treatment with additional private treatment - discussion ends 31 January 2009
 - consultation on how the Care Quality Commission will use its enforcement powers – ***consultation ended 16 January 2009***
 - consultation on West Kent's health strategy ended on the 16 January

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2009. We will endeavour to keep participants abreast of developments – the strategy is due to be published in February and is likely to feature in future LINK events in the West of the County – consultation ended 16 January 2009

News

1. Kent LINK Participant Induction Events

The first induction events are now being planned for Kent LINK participants and are scheduled to take place as shown below. Further information on the content of the day will be available shortly; however, the role and responsibilities of the LINK and participants will be covered during the sessions. If you would like to book a place at one of these events, please contact the administrator shown below. Please advise of any special or dietary requirements when booking your place.

Mid Kent Friday, 20 March 2009
Salvation Army Hall, Union Street, Maidstone, ME14 1ED
10.00am – 3.30pm
Becky – 07976 596913 / 01303 297050

West Kent Wednesday, 25 March 2009
To be confirmed
10.00am – 3.30pm
Becky – 07976 596913 / 01303 297050

East Kent Tuesday, 10 March 2009
To be confirmed
10.00am – 3.30pm
Kirsty – 07976 594541 / 01303 297050

2. Launch of the Kent LINK

The Kent Local Involvement Network (LINK), a new ground breaking initiative, was launched on Wednesday, 3 December 2008 in Lenham, Maidstone. Alan Marsh, County Councillor and Chair of the Kent County Council's LINKs Project Group, was guest speaker at the event. He welcomed the setting up of the LINK in Kent as another step towards enabling local people to share in the development of their health and social care services.

For the first time, the people of Kent (1.4m) will become true shareholders in their health

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and social care services.

LINks are part of a network set up across the UK. The Kent LINK is an independent organisation made up of individuals and community groups who work together to influence and improve local health and social care services in their area.

Legislation gives LINks the power to:

- Make reports and recommendations for improving services and get a reply within a set amount of time.
- Request information within a set amount of time.
- Viewing services first hand.
- Inform the elected politicians on an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of what the LINK has found and receive a response.

Every person, community and voluntary organisation in Kent can be part of the Kent LINK. There are no strings or obligations - they can join and get involved at any level they want and dip in and out of getting involved in LINK activities as they wish. They could become a LINK 'mystery shopper'; join a group around their particular interest area and take part in discussions, consultations, surveys and focus groups. They could be LINK representative on a health or social care planning / decision making body, but with the power of the LINK behind them and accountable to the LINK.

The LINK is not:

- A committee of people representing others.
- Party political.
- A complaints body.
-

It is, in concept, a LINK of the people.....!

3. Extra cash improves specialist Dementia Care Unit

Funding received by Age Concern Canterbury has enabled them to refurbish their popular Collins Unit to provide physical activities, dining and table activity facilities and a secure sensory garden for people with dementia. The Unit is now able to provide specialist support as well as disabled access, making this Unit available to everyone. The Unit now opens for an additional 2 days a week thanks to funding from the Department of Health's carers grants via Kent Adult Social Services.

The Unit is run by a team of professional and dedicated staff and volunteers who have an understanding of dementia. They provide a safe, warm and comfortable environment for people to socialise, develop their confidence and encourage participation and friendships. The service is extremely valuable as it allows dementia

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clients to remain in their own homes for longer. It gives those caring for dementia clients a break, secure in the knowledge that their loved ones are being well looked after and having an enjoyable day out.

One family member said:

"You have transformed my mother's life; she can't wait to get there".

The Unit is now open on Wednesdays and Fridays, with Wednesday sessions being designed for younger onset dementia clients and Friday openings are for dementia clients of all ages. Clients from all over the local area are welcome; there are some subsidised places for those who qualify.

If you have a close friend or family member who you think would benefit from attending the Collins Unit and would like to find out more, please contact Judith Griffiths by e-mail at judith-accanterbury@tiscali.co.uk or by telephone on 01227 780246.

4. The use of 084 numbers in the NHS

The NHS could be stopped from using more expensive telephone numbers such as 084, under proposals set out in a public consultation.

Some people currently have to pay more than the equivalent cost of a local rate call when they telephone their GP or other NHS service. A number of NHS organisations, although still a small minority, have started using 084 numbers in recent years.

Ben Bradshaw, Health Minister, said:

'We are concerned that some people are paying above the odds to contact the NHS. For people on low incomes who need to contact their local doctor or hospital regularly, those costs can soon mount up'.

The Department has issued guidance to the NHS on the use of 084 numbers on several occasions. The consultation will seek a solution that combines the valued extra functions and level of service an 084 numbers provide, but at a cost of a local call. There are alternatives to the 084 range which are able to incorporate these two features.

The 14-week consultation is seeking views from:

- users of 084 numbers
- those who provide services using 084 numbers
- NHS organisations that do not use 084 numbers
- the telecommunications industry
- other interested parties

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Further information is available from:

The Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2NS
Tel: 020 7210
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/index.htm

5. Why cows and trees are important for your health

Some things seem self evident and certain in life - the sun rising and setting, daffodils in spring, cows, trees and green fields signifying that you live in a rural area. Well, possibly not - as far as the trees, cows and green fields are concerned.

The Pharmaceutical Regulations Committee of the Kent Primary Care Agency has been embarking on a review of Kent to determine which areas are rural and which are not. Why, you might ask, is this important? The ability of GPs to dispense medicines from their surgeries for those patients living in areas not well served by community pharmacies depends on the area being classified as 'rural'. Parts of the Wye Valley have already been designated as not meeting the requirements and an appeal is pending. They have now moved on to look at the Tenterden vicinity - a vast area covering the villages of Cranbrook, Staplehurst, fringing Headcorn, Hawkhurst, parts of Ashford and Ham Street and of course Tenterden and all the bits in between.

Written comments are invited by the **20 January 2009**.

If you live in the Tenterden area and currently benefit from being able to get your medicines from your GP's surgery, let us have your views on how important having this service is to you. Write to the Kent LINK at The Kent LINK, Kent & Medway Networks Ltd, FREEPOST NAT17761, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4BR

6. Super Sized Watchdog!

The Care Quality Commission is a new organisation which will bring together the work of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Healthcare Commission and the Mental Health Act Commission. Their work will bring together regulation of the quality of health and adult social care for the first time. They take up their responsibilities in April 2009, and will regulate and improve the quality of health and social care and look after the interests of people detained under the Mental Health Act.

In the run up to their launch, they want to make sure they know and understand the standards of care that members of the public expect and the issues that matter most.

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To do this they are conducting a consultation and full details are available from:

Care Quality Commission, 7th Floor, New Kings Beam House, 22 Upper Ground
London, SE1 9BW
Tel: 03000 616161
http://www.cqc.org.uk/consultation/enforcement_policy-1.aspx.

IA series of one-day events are taking place in:

London - 7 January 2009
Bristol - 9 January 2009
Birmingham - 15 January 2009
Leeds - 16 January 2009

For further information about these events e-mail cqcnational@synovate.com or telephone 020 3059 5284.

Consultations

1. The Care Quality Commission - Enforcement Policy

Summary: Consultation on how the Care Quality Commission will use its enforcement powers.

Further information contact: Care Quality Commission, 7th Floor, New Kings Beam House, 22 Upper Ground, London, SE1 9BW or telephone 03000 616161

Responses to: Enforcement Policy Consultation, Care Quality Commission, FREEPOST LON15399, London, EC1B 1QW email: consultationresponses@cqc.org.uk

Audience: Everyone

Area: UK wide

Consultation ends: 16 January 2009

2. Draft guidance on NHS patients who wish to pay for additional private care

Summary: Review into the consequences of additional private drugs for NHS care.

Further information contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses: By email: additionalprivatecare@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Foundation Trust CEs, Directors of Finance, Medical Directors, Directors of Nursing, PCT PEC Chairs, NHS Trust Board Chairs, Special HA CEs, Directors of Commissioning / Specialised Commissioning Groups

Consultation ends: 27 January 2009



3. Safeguarding Adults - A consultation on the review of the 'No Secrets' guidance

Summary: Consultation about how society learns to empower people to identify and manage risk.

Further information contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: Lucy Bonnerjea - Department of Health, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG or email: nosecretsreview@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: Everyone

Area: UK wide

Consultation ends: 31 January 2009

4. Developing the Quality and Outcome Framework: Proposals for a new, independent process

Summary: A consultation on developing a new strategy for the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF).

Further information contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: Quality Team, Primary Medical Care, Room 2E56, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE or email: QOFconsultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: Professional patient and care representatives, PCTs and other interested parties

Area: UK wide

Consultation ends: 2 February 2009

5. Consultation on end of life care strategy - Quality markers consultation

Summary: A consultation to identify the need for a national approach to raise the quality of care for people at the end of life.

Further information contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: End of Life Care Team, Department of Health, Room 402, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG tel: 020 7972 4967 email: eolc@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs, Medical Directors, Directors of PH, Directors of Nursing, Local Authority CEs, Directors of Adult Social Services, PCT PEC Chairs, NHS Trust Boards Chairs, Allied Health Professionals, GPs, Communications Leads, Emergency Care Leads, Voluntary Hospice Sector, Ambulance Trusts

Area: UK wide



Consultation ends: 6 February 2009

6. End of life care strategy - Quality markers consultation

Summary: A consultation to identify the need for a national approach to raise the quality of care for people at the end of life.

Further information contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: End of Life Care Team, Department of Health, Room 402, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG, tel: 020 7972 4967 or email: eolc@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs, Medical Directors, Directors of PH, Directors of Nursing, Local Authority CEs, Directors of Adult SSs, PCT PEC Chairs, NHS Trust Board Chairs, Allied Health Professionals, GPs, Communications Leads, Emergency Care Leads, Voluntary Hospice Sector, Ambulance Trusts

Area: UK wide

Consultation ends: 6 February 2009

7. Patient experience in West Kent

Summary: The NHS is committed to providing the best possible care to patients in hospital. In order to ensure we continually review our services and meet the needs of our patients, we want to know your opinions of your recent experience in hospital. The research is being conducted by an independent third party agency, and taking part in this survey is completely voluntary. Your answers will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Further information contact:

<http://westkentpct-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/patientexperience>

NHS West Kent, Health Network, West Kent Primary Care Trust, Freepost RRJX-JYUR-UYAC, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1RE

Alternatively, you can email at civic.engagement@westkentpct.nhs.uk or telephone 01732 375287

Audience: Public

Area: West Kent

Consultation ends: 28 February 2009

8. Consultation - Learning disabilities day opportunities

Summary: Modernising services is part of the ongoing programme to promote independence, choice and employment opportunities. As services are modernised service users will be involved to find out what services they would like, how and where they should be provided.

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Further information contact: Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ or telephone 08458 247247

Responses to: Simone Bullen on 01732 525279 or email: simone.bullen@kent.gov.uk

Audience: Service users and carers

Area: West Kent

Consultation ends: 1 March 2009

9. The Care Quality Commission - Reviews in 2009/10

Summary: Consultation document giving an overview of the Care Quality Commission's three types of review with proposals for how they will carry them out in 2009/10.

Further information Contact: Care Quality Commission, 7th Floor, New Kings Beam House, 22 Upper Ground, London, SE1 9BW or telephone 03000 616161

Responses to: Complete web version reply form on Care Quality Commission website, complete Care Quality Commission postal reply form or email: consultationresponses@cqc.org.uk titled 'CQC Reviews'

Audience: Everyone

Area: UK wide

Consultation ends: 12 March 2009

10. Rapid response family mediation service

Summary: Feedback forms are sent to service users / parents / carers to obtain their views about services they receive and how these can be improved for children and young people to prevent family breakdown.

Further information contact: Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ or telephone 08458 247247

Responses to: Jane Grogan on 01892 776217 or email: jane.grogan@kent.gov.uk

Audience: Service users (parents / carers / children and young people)

Area: Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells

Consultation ends: 30 March 2009

11. The use of 084 telephone numbers in the NHS

Summary: The Department of Health is considering prohibiting the use of 084 numbers in the NHS.

Further information Contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: Lois Quayle, 084 Consultation Responses, Department of Health, 2N16 Quarry House, Leeds, LS2 7UE or email: 084consultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Audience: Members of the public, the telephone industry, GPs, pharmacists or other staff working in the NHS in England who receive incoming calls from the public

Area: UK wide

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Consultation ends: 31 March 2009

12. Manual for Cancer Services 2008: Draft children's

Summary: Consultation to make children's cancer measures clear and comprehensive.

Further information Contact: Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS or telephone 020 7210 4850

Responses to: Andrianna Davis, Project Assistant, National Cancer Peer Review, National Cancer Action Team, Department of Palliative Medicine, St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road, London, SE1 7EH or email: Andrianna.davis@ncpr.org.uk

Audience: PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Foundation Trust CEs, SHA Cancer Leads

Area: Kent

Consultation ends: 31 March 2009

13. Survey of parents / carers whose children are having a statutory assessment

Summary: To inform the development of information for children and young people who have a statutory assessment.

Further information contact: Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ or telephone 08458 247247

Responses to: Linda Baker on 01622 350640 or email: linda.baker@kent.gov.uk

Audience: Representative sample of all children who have recently gone through the process

Area: Kent

Consultation ends: 31 July 2009

Events

1. Kent LINK Governors Group meeting 22 January 2009

The Kent LINK Governors Group meeting is to be held on Thursday, 22 January 2009 at 10.00am until 12.00noon at the Salvation Army Centre, 74-80 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1ED.

2. Patient and Public Engagement Workshop 21 January 2009

The Eastern & Coastal Kent Patient and Public Engagement Workshop is to be held on **21 January 2009** from **10.30am** until **3.00pm** at the **Ashford International Hotel**, Ashford, Kent TN24 8UX.

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Your LINK for improving health and social care

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Eastern & Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust (PCT) are inviting the public to a workshop to look at proposed changes in the way people access services when the care is not planned (urgent care) eg out of hours GP services, A&E, minor injuries etc. This is because the Healthcare Commission carried out a study and discovered that people were confused by different ways of getting access to urgent care services.

What is being proposed is a single point of access, a call handling service, which will be the first contact for out of hours enquiries. Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT would like you to be involved in this project in any way you choose and as a start, they are holding this workshop.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- share the vision and proposed scope of the project
- ask what you think about the benefits of a call handling service
- help them identify priority areas for the project to ensure it meets patients' needs
- how they can best communicate the plans to the people of Eastern and Coastal Kent
- identify patient representation for their steering group

This is a chance for you to help the PCT develop a new healthcare service in East Kent and we hope it will be an interesting and enjoyable experience.

Lunch will be provided and the event is free. For further information, please contact Barbara Hills by e-mail at barbara.hills@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk or by telephone 01304 216858.

For more information contact:

Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust, Brook House, John Wilson Business Park, Reeves Way, Chestfield, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 3DD

Tel: 01227 795050

<http://www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk/>

3. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings

The Kent County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) have scheduled meetings in February and March. The priorities of these meetings will be to produce third-party commentaries to feed into the Annual Health Check Process.

The dates for these meetings are:

- 6 February 2009 – East Kent Hospitals University NHS Trust, West Kent Primary Care Trust and representatives discussing non-acute trusts
- 20 March 2009 – Medway NHS Foundation Trust, Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, South East Coast Ambulance Service and patient

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representatives discussing non-acute trusts.

Contact Paul Wickenden on 01622 694486 or email paul.wickenden@kent.gov.uk if you would like further information on these events.

4. Patient Experience in West Kent

The NHS is committed to providing the best possible care to patients in hospital. In order to ensure we continually review our services and meet the needs of our patients, we want to know your opinions of your recent experience in hospital.

The research is being conducted by an independent third party agency, and taking part in this survey is completely voluntary. Your answers will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

<http://westkentpct-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/patientexperience>

Consultation ends: 28 February 2009

NHS West Kent, Health Network, West Kent Primary Care Trust, Freepost RRJX-JYUR-UYAC, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1RE

Email: civic.engagement@westkentpct.nhs.uk

Tel: 01732 375287

Website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

Contact Information

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

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

Tel: 01303 297050

E-mail: info@kmn-ltd.co.uk

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