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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 23 / 4 June 2010

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Date of next HOSC meeting: 10 am, 11 June 2010

Location: Council Chamber, Sessions House

Main Agenda Items: Accessing Mental Health Services: Adult and Older People's Inpatient Services.

Other meetings:

HOSC Agenda Planning Meeting, Friday 11 June 2010, 14:30 - 16:30, Darent Room.

Health in Kent

Delays in operating and confusion over treatment led to death of patient at William Harvey Hospital

Following a narrative inquest verdict, Kent coroner Rachel Redman has ruled that delays in operating and confusion over treatment led to the death of patient Donna Maben, who died of septicaemia at the William Harvey Hospital in Kent in May 2009.

Last month Ms Redman wrote to Stuart Bain, the chief executive of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, with her concern that an operation was not carried out earlier.

In addition, Sarah Harman, the Maben family solicitor, added: "I'm concerned that although the trust has admitted responsibility for Donna's death that the number of mistakes that were made were so significant and were made by a number of different people that I don't think it is

possible to simply change them. "There is something wrong in the culture of that hospital and the procedures of the hospital that needs real careful consideration."

See:

[Kent hospital faces legal action over wife death](#)

Department of Health

The Guardian reports that Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of NHS London, the biggest authority in the health service, has resigned over the Government's decision to halt a wave of hospital reorganisations, in the review of healthcare in the capital, which included possible A & E closures and also the proposed closures of some maternity units.

In a letter to Health Secretary Andrew Lansley, Sir Richard said it made 'no sense' for him to continue as chair, because 'our visions of healthcare delivery bear so little in common'. He indicated that other NHS London board members were also 'considering their positions'.

The Minister replied saying to Sir Richard saying he was sorry he was leaving, but 'neither the government nor NHS London should dictate the decisions made'.

See:

[NHS London chief Richard Sykes resigns in care review row](#)

Shortage of junior doctors

The BBC reports that a shortage of junior doctors to start work in hospitals this August is forcing the NHS to try to recruit from India. The shortage is caused by a combination of new European regulations which limit the hours of junior doctors and cause unfilled vacancies, together with tighter immigration rules introduced in recent years meant many overseas medics left Britain and returned home. In addition, attempts to recruit scores of Indian doctors foundered on a disagreement between Government departments.

See:

[Doctor shortage sees new recruitment drive in India](#)

McKinsey report 'Achieving world class productivity in the NHS'

In response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) question, the Department of Health (DOH) has published a slide version of the McKinsey report 'Achieving world class productivity in the NHS'.

In February 2009 McKinsey was instructed by the Department to provide advice on how commissioners might achieve world class NHS productivity to inform the second year of the world class commissioning assurance system and future commissioner development. The advice from McKinsey, in the form of the following slides, was provided in March 2009.

See:

[McKinsey report on the fiscal future of the NHS](#)

[Health Secretary Andrew Lansley responds to publication of the McKinsey report](#)

Widening participation in pre-registration nursing programmes

The Department of Health has published '[Widening participation in pre-registration nursing programmes](#)' which provides Strategic Health Authorities (SHA) education commissioners, workforce planners, education providers, NHS human resource and training and development professionals, with a series of educational models of workforce development as pathways to support:

- Widening participation into pre-registration nursing undergraduate courses for existing NHS employees in *Agenda for Change* bands 1-4.

- Create effective workforce development opportunities for the nursing support workforce employed within bands 1-4.
- Provide pathways into nursing for staff currently not employed in clinical support roles.

Government

The Government will publish weekly hospital data on MRSA and C. Difficile infections

The Department of Health (DOH) as part of the Government's radical agenda for setting government data free, is publishing weekly hospital data on MRSA bloodstream infections and C. Difficile infections between March and May 2010, in order that patients and the public will be given more up-to-date information about their local hospital.

Previously, data was only published monthly and by NHS trusts, but from early July, infection figures for every NHS hospital in England will be updated on data.gov.uk weekly, giving statistics for each of the previous 12 weeks.

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said:

"This is an important step towards our broader plans to provide more relevant information to patients.

See:

[Weekly infections statistics gives power to patients](#)

NICE argue that there should be a minimum price for a unit of alcohol

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) are arguing for the introduction of a minimum price for a unit of alcohol to help tackle the rise in problem drinking in Britain.

NICE argue that one in 4 men and women are currently drinking dangerous amounts of alcohol that are causing, or have the potential to cause, physical and mental damage. The number of alcohol-related deaths has more than doubled in the past 16 years, with over 8,000 people dying of conditions such as alcohol poisoning and liver cirrhosis every year.

NICE believes that introducing a minimum price for alcohol alongside other measures that make it harder to buy alcohol, like reducing the number of outlets selling alcohol in a given area or the days and hours that it can be purchased, will help to save thousands of lives each year.

See:

[NICE calls for minimum pricing for alcohol](#)

[Health Secretary Andrew Lansley responds to the NICE guidance on drinking](#)

[A minimum price for alcohol?](#)

[NHS Confederation comments on NICE guidelines to reduce alcohol-related harm](#)

Parliament

Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology Note on addictive behaviours

The Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology has published a note on the behaviours of the addictive dimensions of gambling, eating, sex, internet use and shopping.

The Note argues that behaviours such as gambling and over-eating can become compulsive and are linked to personal and social problems argues that It provides an overview of factors contributing to addictive behaviours and the personal and social consequences. It also examines the implications for treatment provision, public health and prevention strategies and industry regulation.

See:

[Addictive Behaviours](#)

House of Commons Standard Note considers whether a defendant should have the anonymity in rape cases which is currently only available to complainants

The House of Commons Library has published a Standard Note [‘Anonymity in rape cases’](#) which considers the relevant legislation and continuing debate as to whether defendants should be granted some form of anonymity in rape cases where currently they are not.

Currently, people who complain that they have been the victims of sexual offences are automatically given anonymity. But the new coalition Government has indicated it intends to introduce some form of defendant anonymity in rape cases.

Other Health Information

The Health Survey for England 2008 indicates that children are eating less than the recommended five portions of fruits and vegetables a day

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) cite the Health Survey for England 2008 in arguing that four out of five children are eating less than the recommended five portions of fruits and vegetables a day which could affect their cancer risk in the future. The survey indicates that 80 % of girls and 81 % of boys do not get their recommended 5 a day and the main source of fruit and vegetables children consume is fresh fruit. The findings indicate that on average boys aged five to 15 have 3.1 portions of fruits and vegetables and girls have 3.3 portions per day. On the day of the survey, one in 14 boys and one in 25 girls did not eat any fruits and vegetables at all.

To promote the WCRF annual Fruity Friday campaign, the organisation will be working with schools across the country to promote fruits and vegetables, as well as highlighting the work of its Great Grub Club website (www.greatgrubclub.com), which gives children, as well as parents and teachers, ideas for making healthy eating more fun.

See:

[Four out of five children don't eat enough fruits and vegetables](#)

[Cancer charity launches iPhone app to promote 5 A Day](#)

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) are concerned about the potential marketing impact of unhealthy food and drink during the World Cup

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) are concerned that having McDonald's, Coca Cola and Budweiser as sponsors or partners for the World Cup could have a potential marketing impact which will mean that millions of children will be subjected to the marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks during the tournament.

The World Cup in South Africa is expected to be watched live on television by hundreds of millions of people, many indicate that the advertising of unhealthy food or drink, particularly on television, is probably a cause of childhood obesity.

See:

[Cancer charity's concern for World Cup sponsorship](#)

UK research summit for oral and dental researchers

A UK research summit for oral and dental researchers to consider the current state of dental research and its future, argues that there should be an overhaul of the way dental research is organised is required in order to enhance excellence and ensure that it remains internationally competitive.

The research summit organised by Professor Paul Speight, President of the British Society for Oral and Dental Research (BSODR), was held at Sheffield University hosted delegates from institutions across the UK, and highlighted a number of steps that must be taken to build on current successes, including closer collaboration with other researchers such as chemists and materials scientists, better engagement with funding bodies and the public, and refocusing research activity on quality rather than quantity.

See:

[New strategy required for dental research concludes summit](#)

Midnight snacking can seriously damage your teeth

Researchers writing in the journal *Eating Behaviours* argue that eating food in the middle of the night can seriously damage your teeth. The study examined medical the records of 2,217 Danes and found midnight snacking increases the risk of tooth loss, regardless of the type of food eaten. This, the researchers argue, is because of overnight changes in saliva flow, which decreases, and cannot removed food debris from the mouth.

See:

[Midnight snacking damages the teeth, experts warn](#)

Research indicates that the rates of men dying from malignant melanoma have doubled over the last 30 years

Research by Cancer Research UK indicates that the rates of men dying from malignant melanoma have doubled over the last 30 years, and experts are concerned because the sharp rise in death from malignant melanoma is due to so many more men developing what is largely a preventable disease.

The research indicates that in the late 1970's fewer than 400 (1.5 per 100,000) men died from melanoma but now more than 1100 (3.1 per 100,000) men are dying from the disease. These figures also reveal that death rates in men over 65 have risen from 4.5 per 100,000 to 15.2 per 100,000 over the same period.

Comparative research indicates that although more women are diagnosed with malignant melanoma, the death rates for women have risen more slowly from 1.5 per 100,000 to 2.2 per 100,000, more men are dying from it indicating that a rise from 2.7 per 100,000 to 14.6 per 100,000.

See:

[Skin cancer statistics - Key Facts](#)

[Men's skin cancer death rate doubles over 30 years](#)

NICE advises against making available on the NHS the drug Sorafenib for patients with advanced liver carcinoma

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidance which advises against making available on the NHS the drug Sorafenib for patients with advanced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of primary liver cancer.

Following the institute's independent advisory committee scrutiny of evidence which suggests that the drug typically increases patient survival by an extra 2.8 months, NICE argue that the high cost of the treatment cannot be justified by its "marginal" benefit. The prognosis for HCC patients is usually less than 24 months.

See:

[Sorafenib for the treatment of advanced hepatocellular carcinoma](#)

[Final NICE guidance rejects advanced liver cancer drug sorafenib](#)

Breast cancer vaccine research

Researchers in America have carried out successful laboratory experiments to develop a vaccine which they argue, has prevented breast cancer from developing in mice.

The researchers have published their findings in the journal, *Nature Medicine* and are now planning to conduct trials of the drug in humans. But they warn that it could be some years before the vaccine is widely available.

Vincent Tuohy, from the Cleveland Clinic Learner Research Institute, said: 'We believe that this vaccine will someday be used to prevent breast cancer in adult women in the same way that vaccines have prevented many childhood diseases.'

See:

[Hopes for breast cancer vaccine](#)

[An autoimmune-mediated strategy for prophylactic breast cancer vaccination](#)

Study indicates how acupuncture relieves pain

A study in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* indicates that American researchers argue that they have pinpointed a molecule which may control how acupuncture relieves pain has been pinpointed. Pain experts argue that these findings may partly explain how acupuncture treatment works.

The researchers experiments argue that their experiments in mice that showed that levels of adenosine, a natural painkiller increased in tissues near acupuncture sites. In addition, the research found that in mice resistant to the effects of adenosine, acupuncture had no effect.

See:

[Adenosine A1 receptors mediate local anti-nociceptive effects of acupuncture](#)

[Acupuncture pain molecule pinpointed](#)

John Pollard, a senior coroner urges a more consistent approach to the way in which neonatal deaths are investigate

John Pollard, a senior coroner has told the BBC that the way in which neonatal deaths are investigated should be more consistent, and the deaths of all babies in hospital should be reported to the local coroner or, in Scotland, to the procurator fiscal.

Currently, baby deaths in hospitals are only reported if they are sudden, unnatural or violent. But Mr. Pollard has requested that he is notified of all deaths of babies and young children in his area.

The Coroners Society, which represents all coroners in England and Wales, said in a statement said that it is up to each individual coroner to decide how to interpret the law on a case-by-case basis. It said it was not within its authority to direct coroners to follow a particular practice.

See:

[Shipman coroner says all baby deaths must be probed](#)

Survey suggests that comparing incomes is a recipe for disaster

A paper in the *Economic Journal* written by researchers from the Paris School of Economics analysing data from the European Social Survey, which covered 19,000 participants in 24 countries, found that three-quarters of those asked thought it important to compare their incomes with others.

But the paper also argues that findings suggest that comparing your income with those of family and friends is a recipe for unhappiness, with the paper arguing that those who compared

salaries seem less content, especially if they looked at those of friends and family rather than work colleagues. In particular, the paper found that the poor were most affected by such comparisons.

See:

[Comparing income with peers causes unhappiness](#)

Local Innovation Award won by Trafford Borough Council

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council has received a Local Innovation Award for 'Taking control of care', for demonstrating strong engagement with users, carers, citizens and disadvantaged groups. In addition the council was recognised for providing better outcomes for carers and using procurement processes that encourage small providers.

The think tank IDeA offers a case study setting out development plans around Trafford's 'Putting People First' programme, which is woven throughout council services. disadvantaged groups. They were also recognised for

See:

[Taking control of care: development plans](#)

[Adult social care winners of the Local Innovation Awards \(LIA\)](#)

Changes to Food Standard Agency (FSA) alert system

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is implementing a new system to change the way information concerning food product withdrawals and recalls is released to consumers. The new system, which takes effect from June 2011, will issue a 'Product Withdrawal Information Notice' or a 'Product Recall Information Notice' to inform consumers and local authorities know about problems associated with food, replacing the previously used 'Food Alert for Information'.

The FSA will continue to issue 'Food Alert for Action' alerts to provide local authorities with details of specific action to be taken on behalf of consumers.

See:

[Changes to FSA food alert system](#)

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has updated the list of product ranges that do not contain the food colours associated with hyperactivity

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has updated its list of product ranges that do not contain the six food colours associated with possible hyperactivity in young children.

The list includes companies whose product ranges have never contained the six colours and companies whose product ranges that have been reformulated to remove the colours. The colours, identified by a Southampton University study financed by the Food Standards Agency, are:

- sunset yellow FCF (E110)
- quinoline yellow (E104)
- carmoisine (E122)
- allura red (E129)
- tartrazine (E102)
- ponceau 4R (E124)

See:

[Update on products free of colours associated with hyperactivity](#)

Safety measures at Dartford River Crossing and M 25

The Highways Agency reports that the two tunnels for northbound traffic along the Dartford River Crossing are to receive a safety upgrade over the next two years as tunnel safety specialists Fogtec Brandschutz GmbH install and maintain a water mist fire suppression system

to control a fire until the emergency services arrive. Work to install the system begins this coming October and is due to be completed in 2012.

In addition, a new emergency gate is to be installed in the central barrier of the M25 on the Kent/Surrey border, with work starting this week.

See:

[Safety Upgrade in Dartford River Crossing Tunnels](#)

[M25 emergency release gate installed in central barrier on Kent/Surrey border](#)

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