

From: TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk [mailto:TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk]

Sent: 29 January 2010 17:07

Subject: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 5 / 29 January 2010

This bulletin is produced weekly by The Information Point

Tel: (01622) 694125,

Freecall: 7000 4125

E-mail: TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk

For our full range of information products please [Visit our K/net pages](#)

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 05 / 29 January 2010.

If you would like to receive further information, please telephone or email the appropriate contact officer responsible. Alternatively, contact Tristan Godfrey on 01622 694486 or email tristan.godfrey@kent.gov.uk.

Consultation from Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF) ‘Sex and Relationships Education Guidance’.

The consultation ‘Sex and Relationships Education Guidance’ seeks views on the draft sex and relationships education guidance. The guidance is for maintained primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units in England on all matters relating to sex and relationships education, including how good quality sex and relationships education can be planned and delivered, how to develop a sex and relationships education policy and how to support the health and social needs of all pupils with regard to sex and relationships.

It is relevant to all staff, particularly senior managers and those responsible for coordinating, teaching and supporting the delivery of sex and relationships education. Head teachers and governing bodies are required by law to have regard to the guidance.

For all the documents:-

See:

[Sex and Relationships Education Guidance](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) has published a guide to Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) ‘[Engaging and responding to your community: a brief guide to Local Involvement Networks](#)’

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), an independent network comprising a mixture of local individuals and organisations from the community, exist in every local authority area of England to give people more influence over how their local health and social care services are planned and delivered. The DOH has published a guide explaining more about LINKs for health and social care managers, and outlining how, through proactive engagement such managers can better understand the needs of the community.

Department of Health (DOH) training module ‘[Pandemic Flu Training Module for Mental Health Trusts, Tertiary and Associated Specialist Trusts](#)’

The Department of Health (DOH) has published a guidance on '*Pandemic Flu Training Module for Mental Health Trusts, Tertiary and Associated Specialist Trusts*' which is based on the recently updated guidance for Mental Health services on planning and responding to an outbreak of pandemic flu. The module is designed to support mental health trusts and other specialist mental health service providers in implementing their plans for responding to a flu pandemic.

Greater use of quality measurement in the NHS has real potential for improving the quality of care, but all those involved need to be aware of the complexities and challenges entailed.

The King's Fund has published a paper '[*Getting the measure of quality: opportunities and challenges*](#)' which argues that the use of quality measures in the NHS has real potential for improving the quality of care, but also argues that quality and safety of health care is complex and challenging to measure, and interpret and care must be taken to avoid misleading patients, distorting priorities and damaging staff morale.

The paper also sets out the issues that should be considered in developing and using indicators for measuring quality, and among the key recommendations is the suggestion that the NHS should widen the scope of quality measurement to include measures of productivity, efficiency and inequality, as well as those that capture quality across patient pathways.

See:

[Quality measures can improve quality of care but risk misinterpretation](#)

Ministers have launched *Care First Careers*, part of the Government's guarantee to young people of a job or training.

Care Services Minister. Phil Hope and Work and Pensions Minister Jim Knight have announced 'Care First Careers', a Government initiative which guarantees that young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who have been looking for work will get a job offer, work experience or training or additional free pre-employment training.

In addition, employers across Britain will get £1,000 for taking on a young person who is struggling to find work. Additional free pre-employment training packages will also get young recruits off to a flying start through the Care First Careers initiative announced today by Care Services Minister, Phil Hope and Work and Pensions Minister, Jim Knight.

See:

[Cash bonus to give young jobless a start in social care
Jobcentre Plus Care First Careers](#)

DOH guidance checklist for reporting, managing and investigating information governance serious untoward incidents.

The Department of Health (DOH) has published '[*Guidance checklist for reporting, managing and investigating information governance serious untoward incidents.*](#)' The document provides guidance for all NHS staff in managing information governance serious untoward incidents, and

should be used in conjunction with previous issued guidance and local guidance issued by the strategic health authorities (SHAs).

The new National Clinical Director for Dementia has been named as Professor Alistair Burns.

Professor Burns will promote better care of people with dementia within the NHS and social care communities and provide leadership for the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy. He is currently Professor of Old Age Psychiatry at the University of Manchester and Manchester Academic Health Science Centre.

Professor Burns has said 'One in three people will die with dementia. The National Dementia Strategy provides the opportunity of a generation to transform the lives of the 700,000 people with dementia and their carers in the UK today. By working together we can one day defeat dementia.'

See:

[New National Clinical Director for Dementia](#)

Professor David Oliver has been appointed as the new National Clinical Director for Older People.

Professor Oliver will provide clinical leadership for the cross Government Ageing Strategy 'Building a Society of all Ages', and will also lead work to implement the Prevention Package for Older People and the key findings from Partnerships for Older People Pilots.

Professor Oliver will also work closely with the new National Clinical Director for Dementia, Alistair Burns, to ensure strong leadership in shaping the future of services for an ageing population, and to promote better care of older people within the NHS and social care services.

See:

[New National Clinical Director for Older People](#)

The Database of Cancer Uncertainties will help to 'accelerate the process' of identifying areas for future cancer research.

The database of Cancer Uncertainties was launched in October 2009 as part of the Co-ordination of the Cancer Clinical Practice Guidelines in Europe (CoCanCPG) with the aim of identifying evidence gaps and as a tool for bringing uncertainties together, to allow them to be prioritised. The prioritised uncertainties can then be promoted to research funders across the EU, and

tracking mechanisms will be developed to make sure that researchers do not duplicate research and help identify ongoing clinical trials.

Speaking at a conference on cancer research at the British Library in London last week, Professor Littlejohns said that it was these gaps in evidence within the field of cancer that makes it one of the most challenging areas for NICE

But argues that 'this project will complement and link with the other tools NICE has produced relating to research recommendations and uncertainties.'

See:

[More cancer research needed, says NICE](#)

Higher vitamin D levels may be linked to lower risk of bowel cancer

The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer (EPIC) study indicates that people with higher levels of vitamin D appear to be significantly less likely to develop bowel cancer. During the study, the researchers discovered that people with the highest concentrations of vitamin D in their blood had a 40 % reduced risk of bowel cancer compared with those recording the lowest levels of the vitamin.

Writing in the British Medical Journal, the researchers concluded that vitamin D may be associated with a protective effect against bowel cancer.

See:

[Higher vitamin D levels may be linked to lower risk of bowel cancer](#)

Researchers indicate that more research needs to be done into the long-term health effects of electronic cigarettes.

Scientists writing in the British Medical Journal argue that there is a need for more research into the long term health effects of electronic, or E-cigarettes, battery-powered devices that simulate cigarettes by allowing the user to inhale a nicotine vapour.

Jean King, Cancer Research UK's director of tobacco control, said: 'there has been little research into how safe e-cigarettes are, and there's also very little regulation to control these products or their marketing. The only way to be sure of any risks or benefits is through rigorous testing.'

See:

['More research' needed into safety of electronic cigarettes](#)

Ambidextrous children are more likely to suffer hyperactivity disorder symptoms and struggle with their school work.

A study by scientists from Imperial College London indicates that ambidextrous children are twice as likely as their classmates to struggle in school, and also likely to have difficulties with language. In addition, the experts argued in Paediatrics journal, that the differences in behaviour displayed by ambidextrous children might be down to the brain's wiring. But the researchers also admitted that much more work needed to be done on researching such children.

See:

[Ambidextrous children 'more likely to be hyperactive'](#)

Research conducted on prisons.

The BBC report that there is growing evidence that the prion, a protein that occurs normally in a harmless form, has a number of important roles in the body.

Swiss researchers say there is evidence that prions play a vital role in the maintenance of the sheath surrounding our nerves, and argue that it is possible that an absence of prions causes diseases of the peripheral nervous system, and evidence suggests that prions are associated with 20 different brain diseases in humans and animals

The latest research in the journal Nature Neuroscience, other studies have indicated prions may protect us from Alzheimer's disease or even play a role in our sense of smell.

At the House of Commons on Wednesday, Stephen O'Brien opened an opposition day debate on dementia services.

[This debate](#) followed on from the National Audit Office's findings that the Government's dementia strategy had failed to be robustly implemented, and concern from the fact that the number of sufferers from the disease is likely to double over the next 30 years.

The Finance Chief of the Department of Health has said that people who have taken up personal social care budgets are spending less than their local authority.

On the other hand, the costs of helping people understand and run their own budgets is higher, but this has meant a cost-neutral result. More than 31,000 people now have their own budget, and 30% of eligible people should have a budget by April next year. John Bolton was speaking to the Counsel & Care annual conference.

See: ['Boost for Cost-Effective Individual Budgets'](#)

A joint report by the Young Foundation and IDeA urges politicians to focus on the happiness and wellbeing of their citizens.

[The State of Happiness](#) is the fruit of four years work based on pilots in diverse areas of the country and finds that services that focus on wellbeing are delivering widespread economic and social benefits.

The report recommends councils to prioritise the following types of programme:

- Teach children resilience in schools - drawing on strong evidence that this improves academic performance and behaviour as well as employability of pupils
- Promote opportunities for neighbours to get to know each other, based on clear evidence that this tends to enhance wellbeing
- Provide support for isolated older people to help them create and maintain social networks, and reduce anxiety and depression
- Shift transport and economic policies to encourage lower commuting times and allow people to spend more time with their families and friends
- Reshape apprenticeships and other programmes for teenagers to strengthen psychological fitness to help young people find and keep work
- Support families so parents are happier and children are less likely to face problems at home and at school
- Promote activities that are simultaneously good for the environment and reducing CO2, and make people feel better about their lives

Also see: ['The Holy Grail of Happiness'](#)

A new campaign will highlight the unseen damage that regular drinking above recommended limits can cause.

The new campaign comes in the light of the fact that 83% of those who regularly drink over the recommended limits don't think that their habits are exposing them to long-term health risks.

It will highlight scientific research which shows that men are 3 times more likely to have a stroke or get mouth cancer, and women are 50% more likely to get breast cancer if they drink heavily.

See the [NHS press release](#) and a [new website](#) which will launch on Monday.

The [latest figures](#) showing the patient waiting times figures have been released.

Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT had 8,793 patients waiting in total, West Kent had 8,111 and Medway had 3,140. The total number of patients waiting over 8 (for outpatients) or 13 (for inpatients) weeks has increased by around 50% compared to the figures last December.

Also see the [DoH press release](#).

The man behind the scare linking the MMR vaccine with autism has been struck off by the GMC.

Andrew Wakefield's paper, published in the Lancet, was written on the basis of case studies of eight children, but he also subjected 11 children to invasive tests without ethical approval, and had filed a patent as inventor of a vaccine to eliminate measles and treat inflammatory bowel disease.

See: [‘Andrew Wakefield found irresponsible by GMC’](#)
[‘The Media are equally guilty over the MMR Vaccine scare’](#)

Scientists at Stanford University have created neurons from skin cells, the discovery of which could revolutionise treatments for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The new study is published in the latest edition of Nature, and was carried out on mice; it also suggests that skin cells could be reprogrammed to provide a limitless supply of blood or bone marrow for personalised transfusions.

See: [‘Neuron breakthrough offers hope’](#)

TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk

Tel: (01622) 694125; Fax (01622) 694127; [Visit our Knet pages](#)