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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 1 / 7th January 2011.

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Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information

Date of next HOSC meeting: [Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)
Friday, 4th February, 2011 at 10.00 am
Location: Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone
Main Agenda Items: 1) The Future Shape of Community Service Provision.

Health in Kent

Cases of influenza in the South East have more than quadrupled since the middle of last month to 87 cases in 100,000 people.

This number is expected to rise further as the schools return after the Christmas break, but the figures are lower than the national average of 124 cases per 100,000.

See:

[‘Flu cases rise four-fold in weeks across South East’](#)

Department of Health

Anne Talbot, National Clinical Lead for the Urgent Care Clinical Dashboard has forwarded a letter advising that the Clinical Dashboard element of the Quality,

Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) National Urgent Care workstream, led by Sir John Oldham, is now underway

The letter highlights the launch of the Clinical Dashboard element of the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) National Urgent Care workstream, and also seeks expressions of Interest from Pioneer Sites.

For all the relevant documents:

See:

[QIPP National Urgent Care Clinical Dashboard - Invitations for Expressions of Interest from Pioneer Sites](#)

Simon Burns, Minister of State for Health has announced a review into the effectiveness of prosthetics services in the NHS for veterans who have lost a limb due to military service.

The review has been instigated because service charities have informed the Department of Health (DOH) that some Armed Forces leavers are concerned that the NHS may not be adequately equipped to provide prosthetic services to veterans at the same standard as those currently provided by the Defence Medical Service at Headley Court.

The Government is committed to the best possible care for those who have served their country, and want to assess the prosthetic services currently offered to veterans by the NHS and how these can be strengthened to meet future demands on the service.

See:

[Improving veteran health outcomes](#)

Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health, has announced that a successful efficiency drive, has enabled the Department of Health to make an extra £162 million available to support front line local health and care services.

The Minister argues that the extra money will be spent on helping people to leave hospital more quickly, get settled back at home with the support they need, and to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital.

In addition, the funding will bring forward the plans being put in place by health and local authorities to work together using NHS funding to support social care, as announced in the spending review. It will also enable local services to respond to pressures this winter.

See:

[Extra money to help people leaving hospital
£162m additional winter pressures to primary](#)

Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health has announced that this year's Change4Life activity, the Great Swapathon will enable families to get more help this year to eat more healthily and get active.

Through the Great Swapathon, families can get access to:

- a £50 book of vouchers for money off healthier foods and activities;
- recipes for healthier alternatives to favourite snacks;
- recipes for family options for each meal time; and
- nutritional and activity advice.

The Minister argues that the £250 million voucher booklet scheme will help to incentivise people to make pledges and swaps. and will give mums and dads tips, help and advice to help them make 2011 the year they get their families healthy.

See:

[Time to Get Healthy In 2011 – Next Phase of Change4Life Launched](#)

An independent report on the Family Nurse Partnership programme has indicated that it has made a difference to the life chances of disadvantaged families with Mothers being more positive about their parenting capacity and having higher aspirations for themselves and their children.

The programme has been tested since 2007 and supports the work of health visitors by providing some more intensive help for those who need it to care for their families. [The report](#) finds that the 12-24 month phase of the programme could be rolled out across the country successfully bringing substantial health benefits.

Also see:

[DoH Press Release](#)

The Chief Pharmaceutical Officer has sent a general letter regarding the 2010/11 Seasonal Influenza, and including an update on supply and availability of antivirals for children under 1 year of age

The message was sent to help ensure that oseltamivir in forms suitable for administration to children under 1 year of age is available to meet potential demand across the country, we are now adopting a multi-layered approach.

See:

[2010/11 Seasonal Influenza: Update on supply and availability of antivirals for children under 1 year of age](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) has released a leaflet covering the complete routine childhood immunisation programme.

The booklet describes the immunisation offered to children during the first 12 – 13 years of life.

See:

[Immunisations between 12 and 13 months of age \(Jan 2011\) : Department of Health - Publications](#)

Following the publication of ‘The path to strong, sustainable and balanced growth, the paper which launched the Government’s Growth Review programme, the Department of Health (DOH) has published a letter inviting strategic health authorities to contribute their views to a component of the Growth Review programme, focusing specifically on the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector.

The Department of Health, in partnership with other relevant government departments, will be participating in a fundamental review of what each part of Government is doing to support and foster growth in this sector. To inform this review we are seeking views from a wide variety of stakeholders – including companies from the life sciences sector and colleagues from the NHS.

See:

[Healthcare and Life Sciences Growth Review: Life Sciences Questionnaire](#)

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See:

[Healthcare and Life Sciences Growth Review: Life Sciences Questionnaire](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) has published a reminder that, following a Secretary of State announcement on 5 October 2010, there is a mandatory requirement for all NHS acute trusts to

report Meticillin Sensitive Staphylococcus aureus (MSSA) bacteraemia diagnosed after January 2011.

This letter also announces that the new HCAI Compendium will be available in January 2011.
See:

[Extension of mandatory surveillance to Meticillin Sensitive *Staphylococcus Aureus* \(MSSA\) and updated Healthcare Associated Infections clinical guidance \(“HCAI Compendium”\) – January 2011](#)

Government

An NHS Confederation report argues that amid efforts to find savings and efficiencies in the health service, the importance of patient experience should not be forgotten.

The report '[Feeling better?: improving patient experience in hospital](#)' argues that understanding and improving how patients experience their care is a key component to successfully delivering high-quality services that are based on their needs.

See:

[Feeling better?: improving patient experience in hospital: press release](#)

Care Quality Commission

In response to comments from Boots the Chemist regarding children and 'flu vaccinations, a Care Quality Commission (CQC) spokesperson said:

"Nothing in the CQC registration prevents Boots Company PLC offering flu vaccines to under-16s, as long as Boots has properly trained staff and the right facilities in place.

"It registered with the Care Quality Commission on 1 October 2010 under the Health and Social Care Act 2008, for treatment of disease and disorders or injuries (which covers treatments such a flu vaccinations), diagnostic and screening procedures, family planning and services in slimming. There are no conditions on its registration that limit the age of people that it can treat.

See:

[CQC says regulations don't stop Boots giving flu vaccine to under-16s](#)

[Pharmacies 'refusing' to vaccinate children against swine flu](#)

Other Health Information

The Royal College For Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has published standards that argue that social workers, police and health departments Children's social workers should have immediate access to paediatricians with child protection skills and experience to provide immediate advice and assessment on children and young people aged under 18 in circumstances where there are child protection concerns.

The standards, which address the significant crisis in children's healthcare state that all UK children deserve safe, high quality medical services, and call for a radical change in the way healthcare is delivered to children and young people in the UK.

See:

[Facing the Future: standards of Paediatric Services](#)

[Child protection standards published by Royal College](#)

See also:

[Policy News](#)

The General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives has told *The Guardian* that NHS maternity services are close to breaking point and care for mothers is worsening.

Cathy Warwick, General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives argues that labour wards are struggling to give women the proper quality of care under the 'relentless' pressure of a record birth rate, staff shortages and increasingly complex births.

These remarks have prompted fresh concern about whether ongoing shortages of midwives in many units is affecting the experience of the 98% of women who have their children in hospital.

There is rising concern about maternity safety. the Care Quality Commission, reported that 22% of mothers were left alone during labour and found that frightening, and argue the situation is due to midwives having to look after several women simultaneously and so not providing what should be one-on-one care.

See:

[Maternity care in UK on verge of breakdown, says top midwife](#)

Figures collated by the Royal College of General Practitioners indicate that the current outbreak of 'flu is set to become a 'children's epidemic' as the recorded number of cases amongst under-fives doubled over the Christmas period, and are expected to rise when schools re-open.

The rise in the number of young children catching 'flu has led to further attacks on the Government for delaying the seasonal advertising campaign promoting flu vaccines, and for showing complacency over the limited uptake of vaccines among at-risk groups. Initially, children were not stressed as a priority group and only 23% of healthy children aged under five eligible for free flu vaccinations have taken them. In addition, the Department of Health was also slow in allowing GPs to use their own judgment in giving the vaccine to children over five, rather than limiting jabs to those with asthma or other severe chest complaints, heart conditions or diabetes.

See:

[Children's flu epidemic feared by doctors as virus escalates](#)

As part of the Government initiative 'Change4life Swapathon, families in England are being offered free vouchers for discounts on healthy foods and activities as encouragement to lead more healthy lifestyles.

The food and fitness industries are funding the tokens as part of the Government plan to involve business in the promotion of healthy living. In addition, parents will also be offered access to nutritional advice and recipes as an incentive to make healthy changes in their family's food and fitness habits.

See:

['Great Swapathon' voucher bid to boost healthy living](#)

The National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse has released guidelines for people who commission and plan the strategic response to drug misuse.

The document '[Drugs related deaths: setting up a local review process](#)' contains ideas and examples of local practice in investigating and reviewing the causes of drug-related deaths which are drawn from existing local systems in England.

A survey for World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) undertaken by YouGov indicates that almost a third of Britons are being put off being more physically active because of the financial cost.

The survey found that 30% of people said the cost of gyms and leisure centres prevented them being more physically active, and the issue of expense seems to particularly affect younger people, with 42 % of 18 to 24-year-olds mentioning financial cost as a reason for not being more physically active. This compares to 19 % in the oldest age group, the over-55s.

WCRF argue that these findings are a concern as there is convincing evidence that regular physical activity reduces risk of cancer, and this is why WCRF recommends that people are physically active for at least half an hour a day

See:

[Third of people say gyms 'too expensive'](#)

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RC PSYCH) has released the interim report [‘National Audit of Dementia \(Care in General Hospitals\)’](#).

The report, published to make the interim findings public, summarises the key findings from a preliminary analysis of aggregated hospital-level data collected as part of the ‘core audit’ of the National Audit of Dementia.

The final report for the first wave of the national audit, which will be published in late 2011, will include findings from a more in-depth evaluation of practice at the level of the hospital ward and recommendations informed by action planning events that will take place in the spring and early summer of 2011.

See:

[Interim Report: Core Audit Modules](#)

[Royal College of Psychiatrists interim report: national audit of dementia care in general hospitals](#)

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have completed a survey which indicates that more than ten million people in the UK today, or 17% of the population, can expect to live to see their 100th birthday.

The report [‘Number of future centenarians’](#) argues that – 17 per cent of the population. Three million are currently aged under 16, 5.5 million are aged between 16 and 50, and 1.3 million are aged between 51 and 65. Around 875,000 are already aged over 65.

See:

[Over ten million people to live to 100](#)

A new small trial American study published in the journal *Cell* had indicated that a new technique could lead to a blood test for detecting Alzheimer's.

The technique relies on the immune system's ability to recognise foreign material, and used thousands of artificial molecules to ‘fish’ for the disease. Researchers hope to use this method to diagnose other diseases earlier, including lung and pancreatic cancers.

See:

[Alzheimer's blood test 'fishes' for signs of disease](#)

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