

---

**From:** TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk [mailto:TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 31 December 2010 08:55  
**Subject:** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 53 30th December 2010

This bulletin is produced weekly by The Information Point  
**Tel:** (01622) 694125,  
**Freecall:** 7000 4125  
**E-mail:** [TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk](mailto:TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk)  
For our full range of information products please [Visit our K/net pages](#)

## Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 53 / 30<sup>th</sup> December 2010

*If you would like to receive further information, please telephone or email the appropriate contact officer responsible. Alternatively, contact Tristan Godfrey on 01622 694196 or email [tristan.godfrey@kent.gov.uk](mailto:tristan.godfrey@kent.gov.uk).*

### Index

[Department of Health](#)

[Government](#)

[Health in Kent](#)

[Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information](#)

[Other Health Information](#)

### Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Information

**Date of next HOSC meeting:** [Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)

Friday, 7th January, 2011 at 10.00 am

**Location:** Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

**Main Agenda Items:** 1) Dentistry

### Health in Kent

**Researchers hope that the results of a project on the quality and provision of long-term home care for older people currently running at the University of Kent Centre for Health Services Studies, will promote the UK from its previous ranking of tenth out of 11 European countries in the quality of care at home for older people.**

The three-year Services and Health for Elderly in Long Term Care project (Shelter) is evaluating services and health by comparing the condition, needs and levels of dependency for elderly residents in long-term nursing home care in eight European countries. The results from the study, which ends in December 2011, will be built into what will be the largest European web-based database of person-centred resident and facility information

See:

[Hopes for long-term home care for older people in UK](#)

## Department of Health

**As part of the NHS Stop Smoking Quit Kit, a week's free trial of nicotine patches will be on offer to those smokers in England who are planning to quit in the new year.**

Andrew Lansley, Minister of State for Health said 'We're hoping, starting on Saturday, and working with our partners in pharmacies across the country, that more than 400,000 people will try to give up smoking using the Quit Kits supplied by the Department of Health.'

The Minister also told the BBC that he hoped people would then complete the full course. But while Charity Action on Smoking and Health welcomed the move, they said the scheme had not been advertised properly.

See:

[Nicotine patches to be offered to England smokers.](#)

**The Department of Health (DOH) have released additional information to the Green Book which presents the latest information on vaccines and vaccination procedures.**

The Green Book, the popular name for the publicly available document which details Immunisation against infectious disease and the principles, practices and procedures of immunisation in the UK, in particular deals with those immunisations that comprise the routine immunisation programme for all children from birth to adolescence.

See:

[Green book](#)

[Immunisation against infectious disease - 'The Green Book'](#)

**Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health has re-launched the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' campaign in the form of radio and press alerts to remind people about the spread of 'flu.**

The Minister argues that figures from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) indicate that cases of 'flu continue to rise, and the campaign, reminds people to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene,

See

[Next Steps on Flu Announced by Health Secretary](#)

**In a leaked letter from the Independent Challenge Group, the Department of Health (DOH) has been warned that planned efficiency savings may not be achievable and would lead to the DOH either cutting services or seeking extra funding.**

The letter from the Independent Challenge Group, set up as part of the Government's Spending Review was reported in *The Guardian* as questioning whether promised quality, innovation, productivity and prevention (QIPP) will achieve efficiency savings, and also raised concerns about the cost of the switchover to the Government's flagship policy of GP commissioning.

See:

[NHS faces more cuts to avoid £10bn shortfall, report warns](#)

[Leaked letter has NHS cuts warning](#)  
[Andrew Lansley faces pressure to speed up NHS efficiency savings](#)

**Advisory firm KMPG has released a report which argues that the 'unprecedented efficiency savings' in the NHS as identified by the recent Health Select Committee's report are achievable through organisational change, performance improvement and innovative ways of delivering healthcare.**

The report by KMPG '[Perform: Helping the NHS deliver up to 20% efficiency savings: less blue sky, more brown mud](#)' identifies ten areas in which efficiency gains of up to 20% are achievable, and argues that many of the proposals in the report have been tried successfully in different NHS organisations, and should be applied widely across the NHS.

See:

[NHS efficiency savings of up to 20% achievable through organisational change, performance improvement and innovation, says KPMG report](#)

**The Department of Health (DH) has released Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) annual reports to bring together information on resources, activity and outcomes from the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) annual reports of 2009/10.**

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) aim to empower people of the community who want to have a say or influence local health and social care services. This report includes case studies highlighting activity of some LINKs during 2009/10 and a quantification of the value of LINKs.

See:

[Local Involvement Networks \(LINKs\) Annual Reports 2009/10: Commissioning, Analysis & Intelligence Team](#)

## Government

**Following extensive work by the NHS European Office to make the European Commission understand difficulties experienced by the UK health sector with the European Working Time Directive (EWTD), the European Commission has announced a consultation with workers' and employers' representatives at EU level to amend the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) which currently stops health professionals from working more than an average 48 hours a week.**

The consultation document, drawn up by the European Commission, acknowledges that laws limiting working hours need to be changed to address problems they cause for sectors such as healthcare, and includes proposals

to change the way on call time is counted, and also proposals for greater flexibility in how rest periods are enforced.

See:

[European Working Time Directive  
Proposals to amend EWTD announced](#)

**As the UK response to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Fourth Ministerial Conference 'The Future for Our Children', the Health Protection Agency (HPA) has released an environmental health indicators toolkit to provide a tool to assist in assessing the distribution of children's environmental health issues.**

The report '[Children's Environment and Health Action Plan \(CEHAP\): pilot environmental health indicators toolkit](#)' highlights priority areas for improvement and monitoring the impact of appropriate interventions, and is a basis on which the impact of the environment on children's health can be assessed and can be widened or narrowed as necessary to reflect the specific needs of the region undertaking the assessment.

See:

[HPA-CRCE-011 - Children's Environment and Health Action Plan \(CEHAP\)](#)

**The Government has launched on-line service making it simple to find key information about dentists in one resource, and also enabling patients to rate NHS dental practices.**

In a similar service to other NHS Internet comparison websites, dental patients will be able to view information such as opening times and additional services offered by England's 22,000 NHS dentists on one page without having to search multiple sources.

In addition, a collaboration between NHS Choices and Patient Opinion also allows patients to post comments and give feedback, and read other people's comments about:

- How easy it is to get an appointment.
- How highly they would recommend the dental practice.
- How well patients are treated by staff.
- If patients felt they were involved in decisions about their care.

See:

[NHS find and choose services](#)

[Your story can change the NHS](#)

[Patients to rate NHS dentists online for the first time](#)

**New research commissioned by the UK Government and carried out by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) indicates that caste-based discrimination exists across Britain.**

The research, '[Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain](#)' which was commissioned as part of the debate over the *Equalities Bill 2010* that received royal assent in April and specifically mentions caste under the section Race, and also makes provisions for amendment of the section.

The report recommends that 'extending the definition of race to include caste would provide further, explicit protection'. It adds that legislations would be the most effective way to tackle it because, 'relying on the Indian community to take action to reduce caste discrimination and harassment is problematic.'

See:

[Government Equalities Office: reports and publications, December 2010](#)

**In the NHS Confederation New Year message, Nigel Edwards, acting chief executive, has commented that because of reorganisation and financial challenges, and continued uncertainty over policy, the NHS is in for one of its toughest ever years.**

Mr. Edwards argues that more must be done to win the hearts and minds of people implementing government policy, and he urges policy makers to do more to show they understand the pressures, and to convince those working in the service that the NHS is on the right course.

Key concerns include:

- The disruption and potential loss of momentum caused by the biggest ever shake up of NHS structures;
- The difficulty of managing an ambitious £15-20 billion efficiency drive that will have negative effects on both patients and staff;
- The ability to cope with these changes, caused by the largest ever cuts in management capacity;
- The uncertainty created by the debate over a major piece of healthcare legislation with decisions needed on who is accountable for what and where power lies.

See:

[NHS must rise to the challenge of toughest ever year](#)

**The BBC report that the All Party Group on Dementia is to launch a major enquiry into the spiralling cost of caring for dementia patients.**

Dementia care in the UK is currently estimated to cost £20bn a year, and is likely to rise to around £27bn by 2018. The group will invite health and social care providers, people with dementia and leading organisations to submit evidence. It then aims to promote the examples of best practice for use across the UK, highlighting existing money-saving programmes, such as a care home liaison team in Doncaster, which cut hospital admissions by 75% in a year.

See:

[Inquiry into UK dementia spending](#)

## Other Health Information

**As part of their evaluation of the White Paper 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS', the King's Fund are looking at trends in hospital waiting times and what may be influencing trends.**

The King's Fund argue that an important issue in understanding trends in hospital waiting times, and what may be influencing changes is seasonal variations in hospital activity, illustrated in peaks and troughs at certain times of the year, most notably at holiday (troughs) and post-holiday (peaks) periods, especially in December/January and also at Easter and in August/September.

See:

[Waiting times tracker: analysis of seasonal effects](#)

**The King's Fund has produced a paper of research evidence looking at reducing emergency admissions.**

The paper 'Avoiding hospital admissions: what does the research evidence say?' argues that emergency admissions to hospital are costly to the NHS and also cause disruption to planned health care. Although considerable efforts have been made within the health service to reduce emergency admissions, the paper argues that there is a need to fully understand which interventions are the most effective to avoid emergency or unplanned hospital admissions.

See:

['Avoiding hospital admissions: what does the research evidence say?': executive summary](#)

**The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) has published the assessment of the effects on mortality of long-term exposure to air pollution in the UK.**

The report '[The mortality effects of long-term exposure to particulate air pollution in the United Kingdom](#)' indicates that particulate air pollution has a considerable effect on health in the UK and, were concentrations of the pollutant reduced, this would lead to notable gains for public health.

See:

[COMEAP report press release](#)

[The mortality effects of long-term exposure to particulate air pollution in the United Kingdom](#)

**British Heart Foundation (BHF) funded research from Oxford University indicates that the weight of the average man recorded in 2000 was 7.7 kg heavier than the weight of the average man recorded in 1986.**

The research in the British Journal of Nutrition ran a detailed project to analyse changes in food consumption and body weight between 1986 and 2000, and concluded that the average man in 2000 ate more calories than men in 1986, but also did less exercise and had a much less active lifestyle.

See:

[Expanding waistlines of the 'Jim Royle generation'](#)

[Average UK male weight up 16lb in 15 years, study finds](#)

**The Prince's Trust third Annual Youth Index indicates that 48% of young unemployed people report mental health problems directly attributable to their unemployment.**

The report [‘The Prince’s Trust Macquarie Youth Index’](#) which gauges happiness across a range of areas from family life to physical and emotional, this year reveals that most young people are happy with most aspects of their lives. But significantly, the index number is also at its lowest point since the study was launched, with the most noteworthy decline around young people’s emotional health and wellbeing.

See:

[Youth Index 2010](#)

[TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk](mailto:TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk)

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