

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. 40 / 2 October 2009

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

DBIS is seeking views on whether the draft regulations on paternity leave support policy proposals, in particular whether the administration of the scheme is straightforward enough for employers and employees whilst ensuring that only those eligible can take it. As part of the Government's commitment to give choice and flexibility to parents, we announced on 14th September our intention to introduce Additional Paternity leave for fathers of children due on or after 3 April 2011. This new right will give fathers a right to up to six months extra leave which can be taken once the mother has returned to work. Some of the leave may be paid if taken during the mother's maternity pay period. This will be paid at the same standard rate as Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) which is currently £123.06.

This new provision will be available during the second six months of the child's life, giving mums and dads with more choice in child care responsibilities and a more equitable sharing of leave entitlements. The scheme has been designed to minimise the administrative burdens on business whilst allowing fathers a greater opportunity to be involved in raising their child.

[Choices for Families: additional paternity leave and pay](#) is available on the department's website.

Consultation closes on Friday, 20 November 2009.

The Department of Health (DOH) have published ['NHS Pay Review Body: Review for 2010'](#) which presents written and statistical evidence and information from the Health Departments relevant to the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) consideration of the three year pay deal.

The Department of Health (DOH) have published a new guidance document ['Authorisation of antiviral medicines - Guidance on the use of FP10SS forms and Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers during the H1N1 \(swine flu\) pandemic in England'](#) on the use of Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers.

The guidance has been issued for two reasons:

- authorisation of antiviral medicines using Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers as well as specifically endorsed FP10SS forms has now been enabled.
- a change in the recommended dose for oseltamivir for children 6 months and over and up to 1 year of age from 2mg/kg to 3mg/kg has been announced by the European Commission.

The guidance also contains useful information on:

- when Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers / FP10SS forms can be used to authorise antiviral medicines.

- how Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers and FP10SS forms need to be completed.
- how Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers can be accessed / re-ordered and all other security aspects around handling Antiviral Authorisation Vouchers

The Department of Health (DOH) have published guidance to the patient and public engagement support programme 2009/10 [‘Helping the NHS put patients at the heart of care’](#). The Government argues that they are committed to help services become better at listening, understanding and responding to the needs and wishes of patients and the public. This document outlines the Department of Health support programme to help services engage patients and the public.

(Also:

The DOH guidance [‘Putting patients at the heart of care: the vision for patient and public engagement in health and social care’](#) sets out the vision for patient and public engagement and explains that patient and public engagement (PPE) is an approach that puts the people who use services at the heart of care. It involves understanding their experience of services, empowering them to make decisions and involving them in the design and delivery of care.

The Department of Health (DOH) website has a new website section [‘NHS Constitution: workforce’](#) which intends that the NHS Constitution brings together in one place for the first time what staff, patients and the public can expect from the NHS. It sets out the purpose, principles and values of the NHS and brings together a number of rights, pledges and responsibilities for staff and patients alike.

(See also:

[The NHS Constitution: securing the NHS today for generations to come](#)
[Patient and public engagement](#)

The NHS Information Centre Adult social care information have produced four new social care publications which illustrates how adult social care is delivered across England:-

Personal Social Services: Home Care Users Aged 65 or over, England - Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities tables, provisional, 2008-09.

(See:

[Personal Social Services: Home Care Users Aged 65 or over, England - Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities tables, provisional, 2008-09:summary](#)

Personal Social Services Expenditure and Unit Costs, England Provisional 2008-09

(See:

[Personal Social Services Expenditure and Unit Costs, England Provisional 2008-09: summary](#)

Community Care Statistics: Social Services Activity, England - Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities tables, provisional, 2008-09

(See:

[Community Care Statistics: Social Services Activity, England - Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities tables, provisional, 2008-09: summary](#)

[Social Care and Mental Health Indicators from the National Indicator Set - further analysis, provisional, England 2008-09.](#)

The publications are all accessible via the [NHS Information Centre Statistics and data collections](#) page.

The House of Commons Library has published a Standard Note on [Social Tariffs](#) which summarises the controversy and recent developments regarding the lower prices offered by energy supply companies to consumers who are vulnerable to fuel poverty.

A new one year pilot initiative *Ahead of the Game – Organise Your Defence* which aims to help educate men about the symptoms and risks of ‘male’ cancers and encourage them to present earlier with their symptoms has been announced by Secretary of State for Health, Andy Burnham. The Football Foundation will run the pilot scheme which aims to utilise the appeal of football to raise awareness and improve men’s knowledge of the signs and symptoms of lung, bowel and prostate cancers in men aged 55 and over who are most at risk of dying from these cancers.

(See:

[New pilot scheme will use football to promote awareness of cancer symptoms in men](#)
[Football to put the boot into cancer](#)

The eighth quarterly ‘Practice Based Commissioning GP Practice Survey Wave 8’ covering a sample of practices from each primary care trust (PCT), conducted between June and August 2009.

The aims of the survey are to get feedback from practices on their perception of the support offered by their PCT and on the clinical and financial engagement of practices with PBC. The survey is part of a group of indicators that will be assessed together to give a picture of PBC implementation.

Key findings include:-

- Nine out of ten practices (92%) say they are part of a PBC group, as they did in Waves 6 and 7.
- Three quarters of practices (75%) say that they have now received an incentive scheme, as was also the case in Wave 7.
- Just over three in five practices (63%) have submitted business cases for service redesign. This is consistent with the previous three waves.
- Nearly two thirds of practices (64%) now provide new services commissioned as a direct result of PBC. This result is 8 percentage points above the result for wave 5, but in line with the results of waves 7 (62%) and 6 (61%).

The [Practice based commissioning: GP practice survey wave 8](#) relevant documents can be found on the Department of Health (DOH) web pages.

(See also:

[Practice based commissioning: clinicians in commissioning](#)
[Practice Based Commissioning GP Practice Survey Wave 8](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) have released the following statistics regarding ‘Bed Availability and occupancy- Year Ending 31 March 2009’

The KH03 is an annual collection from all NHS organisations that operate beds, ordinary or daycase, both NHS Trusts and PCTs. It collects the total number of available bed days and the total number of occupied bed days by ward classification.

Key findings for 2008/09:

- The average daily number of open and staffed general & acute beds was 121,688. This is a decrease of 92 (0.1%) since 2007/08.
- Average occupancy of general & acute beds was 86.7% which is an increase from 85.3% in 2007/08.
- The average daily number of open and staffed day case beds was 10,959. This is an increase of 448 (4.3%) from 2007/08.

The statistics are available.

There has been a call for a change in the law around childcare following the news that two police officers have been told that they have broken the law by looking after each other's children.

According to the Childcare Act the women would need to be registered as childminders as the childcare lasted for more than two hours a day and constituted receiving a reward.

(See:

[*Review of Babysitting Ban ordered*](#)

[*Police Officer calls for more Ofsted Discretion*](#)

Ed Balls is to announce new measures to support those children with disabilities and special education needs by making the assessment process easier and more independent.

The assessment of needs may be taken away from local authorities who have been accused of considering the financial costs above the needs of the children.

There will also be new behaviour guidance aimed at tackling the number of SEN pupils who are excluded from school, these would address the specific needs of pupils and tackle behaviour issues early.

(See:

[*Special needs system Shake-Up to improve support of Pupils*](#)

The inquest into the deaths of a Mother and her daughter in Leicestershire has ruled that she killed herself and her daughter following years of harassment by local youths and worries about her disabled daughter's future.

The jury said that neither the police nor the local councils had handled the family's complaint properly, and the Home Secretary has said that they were wrong to regard the anti-social behaviour as low-level crime. The Independent Police Complaints Commission is to investigate the police handling of the case.

(See:

[*'No Excuses' over Family's Deaths*](#)

[*Councils blamed for Family's Deaths*](#)

[*Government has 'Coasted' on Anti-Social Behaviour*](#)

An investigation is underway at a school in Coventry following the death of a 14yr old girl following a vaccination for cervical cancer. There can be no confirmed link between the vaccination and the death until after a post-mortem, but the batch of the vaccine in question has been placed into quarantine and the vaccination programme has been suspended.

An investigation is currently underway, and a small number of other girls at the school had reported mild symptoms such as dizziness and nausea. The national programme started last September, and around a million girls have so far received the Cervarix vaccine safely, although there has been controversy over the selection of this vaccine rather than Gardasil which is used in the majority of vaccination programmes across the world.

(See:

[*Death of Cancer-Jab Girl Probed*](#)

[*Schoolgirl dies after Cervical Cancer Vaccination*](#)

A study to be published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health finds that children whose mothers go out to work have poorer dietary habits, engage in more sedentary activity, and are more likely to be driven to school than children's whose mothers are not employed.

Children whose mothers worked full time were less likely to snack on fruit or vegetables between meals, or to eat three or more portions of fruit a day. These children were also more likely to spend at least 2 hours a day in front of the TV or at a computer, and they were more likely to be driven to school rather than walk or cycle.

Busy working parents may have less time to provide their children with healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity, say the authors, who cite previous research, suggesting a link between working mothers and a higher risk of obesity in their children.

(See:

[*Working Mums' Children 'Less Fit'*](#)

[*Working Mums have Unhealthiest Children*](#)

Gordon Brown is to address the Labour Party Conference this afternoon in what has been described as the most important speech in his political career. He is expected to lead on a crack-down on anti-social behaviour and crime.

Following on from the inquest verdict into the death of Fiona Pilkington he is expected to say "We will not stand by and see the lives of the lawful majority disrupted by the behaviour of the lawless minority." As part of this crackdown he will increase the measures to tackle problem families by increasing the use of Family Intervention Projects and Drinking Banning Orders.

(See:

[*Brown targets Crime in Key Speech*](#)

[*Gordon Brown to promise Crackdown on Bad Parents*](#)

The Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion has said that the government needs to devolve power over employment and skills policy to local councils and sub-regional bodies.

He also said that in the long-term health, education and transport policies are best sorted at local level, and that current initiatives are "like throwing money down the drain".

(See:

[*Devolution 'Key' to Employment and Skills Initiatives*](#)

Measures to improve behaviour in schools and tackle bullying are due to be announced by Schools Secretary Ed Balls at the Labour Party conference.

Parents in England will be given a leaflet warning they are responsible for their children's behaviour. His speech follows Gordon Brown's pledge to reduce anti-social behaviour. Mr Balls is set to emphasise the [importance of discipline in schools](#) - and the rights and responsibilities of pupils, parents and teachers.

New rules which came into force on 1 October should ensure that thousands of workers get a fair deal on tips and wages.

The changes make it illegal for businesses to [use tips to bring staff pay up to minimum wage levels](#). They come into effect on the same day as new increases to national minimum wage rates which will benefit up to one million people. The new rates for this year, which also come into effect tomorrow, are:

- Low paid workers aged 22 and over get an increase from £5.73 to £5.80 an hour.
- The rate for 18 to 21-year-olds has risen from £4.77 to £4.83.
- For 16 and 17-year-olds, the rate has gone up to £3.57 an hour from £3.53.

(See also:

[*CBI reaction to the minimum wage pledge*](#)

Families of murder and manslaughter victims are to benefit from a boost in practical and emotional support, after Jack Straw announced proposals for a new National Victims Service, beginning with a service for those affected by murder and manslaughter.

[The National Victims Service](#), which will be introduced during this financial year, will begin its work by offering one-to-one tailored support to all those bereaved by murder or manslaughter to help them cope with the trauma of losing a loved one to crime. The government is providing an extra £2 million this financial year to the national organisation, Victim Support, to provide the service, ensuring that bereaved families are offered the services of an individual support worker who will:

- conduct a personalised needs assessment for family members
- provide specialist emotional, practical and financial support, responding to the individual needs of bereaved relatives
- liaise with criminal justice agencies on behalf of the family
- help families to access additional services such as legal services, financial advice and post-traumatic stress disorder counselling
- deliver updates from the criminal justice agencies involved in the investigation in order to ensure that the family are aware of and fully involved in the progress of the case.
- will continue to provide support post sentence.

Violent partners will be banned from their homes and their victims given support to escape abuse under new government proposals.

[The police will be able to issue domestic violence protection orders](#), known as 'Go' orders, to bar the perpetrators of domestic violence from their homes for up to a fortnight, giving their victims breathing space to consider their options. Currently, victims can only be protected immediately if the perpetrator is charged and bail conditions set, or if a civil injunction is sought by the victim. This means that in many cases, the only option for victims is to escape to temporary accommodation. The 'Go' orders will allow police to give evidence on the victim's behalf, removing the perpetrator from the home and preventing contact with the victim where they are concerned about the on-going risk of violence.

Safety checks are being carried out at all private clinics used to cut NHS waiting times in England after a man died during a routine operation.

Dr John Hubley bled to death during a gall bladder operation at Eccleshill Treatment Centre in Bradford in 2007. It subsequently emerged that there were no emergency blood supplies on site and key medical equipment was unavailable. [The Care Quality Commission](#), which regulates healthcare in England, is now looking into procedures at all clinics.

The NHS Confederation has responded to this year's Euro Consumer Health Report.

Commenting on the Euro Consumer Health Index, [Nigel Edwards](#), policy director at the NHS Confederation which represents over 95% of NHS organisations, said: "As ever with this survey, all but the broadest of comparisons between countries have little practical use. Nevertheless, the NHS has made progress, scoring more points than last year and holding its position."

Read the [Euro Consumer Health Index Report](#) for 2009.

The Foundation Trust Network (FTN) report *Leading the field: Foundation Trusts and Their Approach to the Sustainability Agenda* has been published.

[The report](#) looks at the role of Foundation Trusts in leading the way on sustainability and assesses the opportunities and threats to the agenda from the chilly economic climate in the NHS.

The FTN surveyed a range of FTs that vary considerably in their progress on sustainability. They expressed both optimism and concern regarding the fate of sustainability as public budgets

tighten. On one hand, many said sustainability presents a real opportunity for delivering effective and efficient processes and delivery of care in straitened times.

Read the full report: [Leading the field: Foundation Trusts and Their Approach to the Sustainability Agenda](#)

A "behaviour challenge" has been issued to the one in five secondary schools in England where inspectors say pupils' behaviour is not good enough

The government says that if they do not ensure pupils behave they face external intervention, and that parents would be reminded that they must support schools. Schools Secretary Ed Balls in his speech to the Labour Party conference announced a review of provisions to prevent the promotion of racism in schools.

Mr Balls has asked former chief inspector Maurice Smith to present a report by next January. The Department for Children, Schools and Families said the review would consider:

- Whether existing safeguards are sufficient
- Whether there is a case for further measures to maintain trust in the teaching profession and protect children from indoctrination and discrimination - particularly, whether affiliation to an organisation that promotes racism should be grounds for barring
- Whether safeguards should extend more widely across the school workforce.

(See also:

['Behaviour Challenge' set for secondary schools](#)

[BNP teacher ban 'to be examined' Ed Balls announces a review into current provisions against promoting racism in schools](#)

Gordon Brown's guarantee to introduce a national care service looks set to blow a £250m hole in local authority budgets.

The Department of Health has put the scheme's annual cost at £670m. It will contribute £420m leaving councils to find £250m, which would have to find the money "through efficiency savings".

The government does not want to prescribe a solution but [councils' new responsibilities](#) would be compensated for by removing existing work on a "one in, one out" basis.

The health think tank the King's Fund labelled the move "surprising" and suggested it could create a perverse incentive, where councils pushed elderly people into residential homes where they would have to pay for their own care.

(See also:

['Free personal care' for elderly](#)

The *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (2008)* which has just been enacted, offers legislation designed to respond to changes in society since the 1990 Act and ensures it is fit for purpose in the 21st Century. The 2008 Act maintains the regulatory system set out by the 1990 Act.

Public Health Minister Gillian Merron said: 'This landmark legislation ensures that the UK remains at the forefront of scientific advances in this field, now and into the future. The Act has already touched so many lives - ensuring scientists have the opportunity to work on discovering new cures for devastating illnesses, and offering others the chance to have a much wanted family.

The Department of Health (DOH) argue that the 2008 Act:

- Ensures that all human embryos outside the body – whatever the process used in their creation - are subject to regulation.
- Ensures regulation of human-admixed embryos, which are created from a combination of human and animal genetic material for stem cell research.
- Bans sex selection of offspring for non-medical reasons. This puts into statute a ban on non-medical sex selection which is currently in place as a matter of HFEA policy. Sex

selection is allowed for medical reasons only, for example to avoid a serious disease that affects only boys.

- Recognises same-sex couples as legal parents of children conceived through the use of donated sperm, eggs or embryos. These provisions enable, for example, the civil partner of a woman who carries a child via IVF to be recognised as the child's legal parent. These provisions came into force on 6 April 2009.
- Values the role of all parents by retaining a duty to take account of the welfare of the child in providing fertility treatment, but replaces the reference to "the need for a father" with "the need for supportive parenting".
- Revises the restrictions on the use of HFEA-collected data to help enable follow-up research of infertility treatment.
Extends the time that embryos can be stored for, to up to 55 years in cases of premature infertility.

The Department of Health have published '[NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care: public information booklet](#)' which gives a summary of information for the public on NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care, including details of what an individual should do if they think they may be eligible.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have published a consultation on their strategy for 2010-2015

Before the strategic plan is finalised, CQC want to get views on how they should use their powers and resources to achieve the best possible care for people across England.

The consultation document outlines:

- the challenges the Commission sees
- what they are seeking to change as a result;
- five strategic priorities
- what they will do to achieve their aims
- how they will measure the outcomes for people who use services

The commission will also be talking to people across the health and social care sector to get their views on the strategic priorities.

Launch date: 1 October 2009

Closing date: 24 December 2009

See: [Our Strategy for 2010–2015](#)

The health secretary [Andy Burnham](#)'s plans to give hospital in-patients and their families free parking, have been criticised for not going far enough.

[Patient campaign groups](#) including Macmillan Cancer Support say that out-patients have been 'ignored' and opponents warn they will end up covering the costs of the move. Plans are already underway in Scotland and Wales for all patients to get free parking. Mr Burnham's plans will affect England.

The NHS may fail to spot concerns about patient safety unless it improves its monitoring of out-of-hours GP services. These are the early observations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) enquiry into out-of-hours provider Take Care Now

The enquiry was triggered by the tragic case of Mr David Gray, a patient who was treated by a locum doctor from Germany and died following the administration of 100mg of diamorphine. Five Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) that commission out-of-hours services from Take Care Now were visited by CQC. The Commission found that although trusts monitor response times, they do not consistently look at the quality of care. This could mean potential problems and indications of poor care could be missed.

The Commission is concerned that as monitoring varied across all five trusts, PCTs across the country may not be monitoring GP out-of-hours services closely enough.

See: [Care Quality Commission press release](#)
[Find out more about our enquiry into Take Care Now](#)

See also: [Call for out-of-hours GP scrutiny](#) (BBC)
[Concern over out-of-hours medical treatment](#) (The Independent)

The Department of Health have released NHS inpatient and outpatient waiting times figures 31 August 2009

The key points from the latest statistics are:

Inpatient Waiting times

- The number of patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, waiting over the 26 weeks standard for inpatient admission at the end of August 2009 was 59 (compared to the total of 587,644).
- The number of patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, waiting over 13 weeks at the end of August 2009 was 45,200, an increase of 2,200 (5.1%) from August 2009, but a rise of 4,400 (10.8%) from August 2008.

Outpatient Waiting times

- The number of patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, waiting over the 13 weeks standard for a first outpatient appointment following GP referral at the end of August 2009 was 74 (compared to the total of 1,049,878).
- The number of patients, for whom English commissioners are responsible, waiting over 8 weeks at the end of August 2009 was 81,300, an increase of 19,400 (31.1%) from July 2009, and a rise of 31,700 (63.9%) from August 2008.

(See:

[Statistics and additional tables](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) have published '[Pandemic influenza: additional measures to meet workforce supply](#)' which summaries agreed employment arrangements to enable local employers to recruit appropriately qualified health professionals in the event of a pandemic.

(See:

[Pandemic influenza:additional measures to meet workforce supply](#)

Forthcoming Parliamentary Business

The House of Commons and House of Lords are in summer recess

TheInformationPoint@kent.gov.uk

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