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Health in Kent

Cuts in Social Care Services will reduce council spending by £3m a year

The changes approved last Friday will affect more than 3,000 people in Kent who receive [non-nursing social care services](#) in their own homes.

There are four main changes, which will effect from January next year:

Introduce charges for mental health services

Charge for day care and transport for the first time

Increase amount of income included in assessment for charges from 85% to 100%

Reduce Disability Related Expenditure Assessment from £21 to £17 per week

Kent County Council carried out a consultation during the summer, writing to 24,500 people who use social services.

See also:

[Charges for adult social care services \(KCC Website\)](#)

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has this year so far recorded recorded 10 times more cases of measles in Kent than those recorded in 2010.

The HPA reported 62 cases up to July, mainly in children and young adults, compared with six in 2010, and argued that many cases had been in clusters in universities and schools, with many patients unvaccinated.

See:

Department of Health

The NHS Information Centre has release the provisional report for the [Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey, England 2010-11](#) as part of the User Experience Survey Programme.

The User Experience Survey Programme, which operates on an annual basis, covers all service users aged 18 and over who receive Social Services funding. The survey is used to target areas of particular interest within Adult Social Services, and aims to gauge whether services help individuals to live safely and independently in their own homes.

For all the relevant material, see

[‘Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey, England - Provisional 2010-1](#)

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has published the annual report providing an overview of the NIHR’s activities and key achievements over the year.

The report [‘National Institute for Health Research: Annual Report 2010/11’](#) sets out how sustained Government investment in research has enabled the institute to involve partner institutions in the research programmes, infrastructure and faculty and systems to facilitate health research in England.

See:

[National Institute for Health Research Annual Report 2010/11 published](#)

The Department for Health (DOH) has released draft guidance to support clinical commissioning groups.

The clinical commissioning groups are designed to have a strong clinical focus which aims to bring together patients, carers and their communities. In addition, they will have robust governance requirements which are accountable to patients together with arrangements for commissioning with other clinical commissioning groups, local authorities and the proposed NHS Commissioning Board.

The guidance comes as the NHS moves towards a stronger and streamlined management system for the new commissioning arrangements which supports the reduction of administration costs by a third. From next month, the NHS will have moved from ten management teams at SHA level to just four SHA clusters.

See:

[Further steps along the road to a clinically led NHS](#)

The Department of Health has released the following statistics gathered from the NHS 111 Service.

The call statistics relate to the NHS 111 service up to and including August 2011 from the four pilot sites providing this service at this time.

The main findings for August 2011 were:

In August, there were 35,503 calls to the 111 service, with 72% of these calls from people dialing direct. In August 84% of calls made to the 111 service were answered, with 97% of these answered within 60 seconds.

Average length of a call episode for data up to and including August was 8 minutes 48 seconds, with 77% of callers receiving a triage and 2% of people called back.

On average 33% of call time was handled by clinical staff for all calls up to and including August.

See:

[Statistical press notice: NHS 111 Minimum Data Set – August Release](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) has released the official report on NHS quality and financial performance between April and June 2011.

The report '[The Quarter](#)' indicates that the NHS continues to perform strongly for patients, and achieves good results against the majority of key quality standards.. In addition, the report indicates that the NHS has not only maintained the quality of care patients receive but achieved improvements in key areas – reducing MRSA and C. difficile infection rates as well as driving down breach rates for mixed sex accommodation.

See: [The Quarter: quarter 1 2011/12](#)

[The Quarter, quarter 1 2011/12](#)

Government

Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health has delivered a speech for 'Help the Hospices'

See:

[Speech: 26 September 2011, Andrew Lansley, Help the Hospices](#)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has launched Age Action Alliance which is designed to celebrate the lives of older people and address the challenges of our ageing society. The launch of Age Action Alliance coincides with Older People's Day and is a supporting organisation comprising a partnership of organisations designed to work together to improve the lives of older people and help transform communities into a better place to grow older.

See:

[Coming together to improve the lives of older people](#)

The Chief Executive of the NHS has said that failing foundation hospitals should be allowed to return to NHS control, Andrew Lansley wants to remove this provision from the current Act as part of the Health and Social Care Bill.

David Nicholson was giving evidence to the public inquiry on the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust when he said that, from time to time, the state needs to be able to take on the management of individual organisations. The Bill will be debated again in the House of Lords on 11th October.

See:

[Guardian reporting](#)

New regulations for the regulation and governance of health research have been laid before Parliament which will establish the Health Research Authority. The [Health Research Authority Regulations 2011](#) will streamline regulation and create a unified approval process and come into force at the beginning of December.

Parliament

The Lords Constitution Select Committee has published a report on the Health and Social Care Bill which argues that proposed legislation risks ‘diluting the Government’s constitutional responsibilities with regard to the NHS’.The report [‘Health and Social Care Bill’](#) argues that proposals in the Bill risk weakening Ministerial responsibility, and suggest amendments to put the matter ‘beyond legal doubt’.

See:

[Committee publishes report on Health and Social Care Bill](#)

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published an annual report on the state of health and social care in England.

The report [‘The state of health care and adult social care in England: an overview of key themes in care in 2010/11’](#) covers the period April 2010 until March 2011 and is based on CQC’s responsibilities under the *Health and Social Care Act 2008*.

See also:

[State of Care 2010/11](#)

Other Health Information

The NHS Confederation is calling on the European Union to strengthen checks on healthcare workers moving between countries, as a way of protecting patients from unsafe practice.

Representing the interests of the health service to Europe, the NHS Confederation’s European Office, is arguing for new safeguards, including a European-wide alert system for regulators to warn each other if incompetent or fraudulent health workers try moving to another country to work.

See:

[NHS calls for stronger checks on the movement of European healthcare workers](#)

The NHS Confederation has released a briefing which looks at how the Health services research (HSR) on the NHS investigates how healthcare services can best be organised, financed and delivered.

The briefing ‘The influence of health services research on the NHS’ covers some key issues that challenge NHS clinicians and managers daily, such as patient safety and cost cutting, and looks at where HSR has addressed them.

See:

[The influence of health services research on the NHS](#)

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and NHS Confederation have released a briefing which offers guidance to managing real and perceived conflicts within clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

The briefing [‘Managing conflicts of interest in clinical commissioning groups’](#) argues that with early intervention, good planning and governance, risks can be mitigated. In addition, the paper summarises conversations with commissioners, providers, regulators and professional bodies about the real and perceived conflicts of interest that clinical commissioning groups will have to address.

The third annual report on the End of Life Care Strategy has been published showing the progress which has been made over the three years.

[The report](#) shows that progress has been made to reduce the number of people who die in hospital although this has been slow. The national director has said that progress still needs to be made on bereavement and spirituality, but work has been going on to help GPs initiate end of life conversations, a toolkit of resources for residential homes, and various other resources and training.

A paper from the King's Fund summarises the different forms of integrated care and their impact so far on the NHS as a means of illustrating how working with adult social care can help clinical commissioning groups manage their new responsibilities

The paper [‘Social care and clinical commissioning for people with long term conditions’](#) is based on the King's Fund 2010 review by Ham and Curry, it has been prepared in the light of the increased interest in integrated care arising out of the work of the NHS Future Forum and the Government's response.

For all the relevant documents, see [‘Social care and clinical commissioning for people with long-term conditions’](#)

The Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC) has released a report containing the preliminary findings of research looking at how married couples living with dementia make decisions on a daily basis.

The report [‘The social process of everyday decision-making by people with dementia and their spouses’](#) found that people with dementia can still make decisions in their everyday lives and with support from partners can continue to do so as their condition advances.

See :

[Living with dementia and making decisions](#)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has released a scoping paper on rights, responsibilities, risk and regulation, and how these strands connect the lives of adults who use care and support facilities.

The scoping paper [‘A ‘four nations’ perspective on rights, responsibilities, risk and regulation in adult social care’](#) reviews the approaches and attitudes to risk taking, considers current and likely future regulatory responses and draws out similarities and differences

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published updated guidelines on:-

[Autism spectrum disorders in children and young people](#)

[Multiple pregnancy](#)

[Obesity](#)

In addition, NICE has published a new quality standard on [breast cancer](#) for use in all NHS-funded settings in England. The new standard recognises not only that age should not affect a patient's treatment, but also the importance of achieving a good aesthetic outcome to surgery, as well as reducing the chances of the cancer returning. .

A report by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) argues that the NHS must address the significant variations in care experienced emergency surgical patients.

The report '[The higher risk general surgical patient: towards improved care for a forgotten group](#)' describes key issues and standards involved in higher risk emergency surgery, and argues that Trusts should formalise their clinical pathway for patients undergoing such surgery, to ensure that plans are compliant with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

See:

[Address variations in care now for 'forgotten' patients, surgeons tell Trusts](#)

[Poor NHS care puts lives of emergency surgery patients 'at risk'](#)

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