

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)  
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## Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bulletin No. 37 / 11 September 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](mailto:tristan.godfrey@kent.gov.uk).*

### **The Department of Health has published a consultation on proposals to discontinue some current inpatient and outpatient statistic collections**

The Department of Health currently publishes, on a monthly basis, National Statistics on NHS Inpatient and Outpatient Waiting Times in England.

These figures have been published for a number of years, and have been used to measure the waiting times for the first outpatient and inpatient stages of a patient's treatment pathway.

However, the Department of Health also publishes monthly data on NHS Referral to Treatment Waiting Times, which measures the total waiting time from GP referral to treatment. This data is now the main source of information on NHS waiting times.

Now that this information is routinely published, the inpatient and outpatient waiting times could be viewed as a duplication of data collection resulting in undue burden to the NHS.

The proposal is that the Inpatient and Outpatient Waiting Times collection and publication should be dropped from April 2010, and this consultation invites comments.

(See:

[NHS Waiting Times Statistics publications produced by the Department of Health](#)

**Launch date: 8 September 2009**

**Closing date: 1 December 2009**

**The Department of Health (DH) have launched a consultation '[Pandemic influenza and the Mental Health Act 1983: consultation on proposed changes to the Mental Health Act 1983 and its associated secondary legislation](#)' on whether there is a need to make temporary changes to the Mental Health Act 1983 should exceptional circumstances arise during pandemic flu.** The contingency legislation would enable mental health patients to continue to get the treatment they need in the event of severe staff absences.

The consultation and relevant documents can be accessed on the [new publications pages](#) of the DH website.

(See also:

[Department of Health consults on pandemic flu contingency legislation for mental health](#)

**Consultation launch 10 September 2009**

**Consultation ends 7 October 2009.**

**The UK's social housing system needs to be "urgently and radically" overhauled to address the growing problem of overcrowding, research by the LGiU has shown.**

The report, [Room to Move](#), recommends an "overhaul of current legislation" to bring about fundamental changes to local government finance and to loosen the constraints on councils, enabling them to build more social housing and tackle the complex conditions that lead to overcrowding. The research was commissioned by Westminster Council, which has been at the forefront of tackling overcrowding in central London, to find a long-term solution to this problem.

The report says councils should be given more financial freedoms and flexibilities to secure finance from the private sector and plough it back into social housing. It also recommends giving councils the freedom to create a mixed economy of tenure to widen the housing choices available to social tenants. This would involve offering alternative tenure options alongside traditional permanent tenancies and the associated waiting list and allocations policies.

Read the full report: [Room to Move](#)

**Hundreds of people have signed a petition to try to keep full maternity services at a Kent hospital.**

They were protesting at [Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust](#)'s plans to concentrate consultant-led services at the new Pembury Hospital from 2011. The petition was launched on Saturday in Week Street in the town centre. More than 20,000 letters are to be sent out asking people to add their names. The NHS Trust said the proposed changes would raise standards of care. The petition is being organised by Peter Carroll, Liberal Democrat prospective parliamentary candidate for Maidstone.

**More than half of cancer patients do not get free or discounted parking on hospital visits, contrary to government guidelines, a poll suggests.**

The Department of Health has recommended NHS trusts in England offer some kind of concession for people who require repeat visits to hospital. But the Macmillan Cancer Support survey of 337 patients found most did not. The NHS Confederation said it planned a charter for hospital parking and said fair charges was the best way forward. Macmillan Cancer Support said the current situation was unfair and was an "appalling disjointed mess". Paying for parking is a controversial issue which the charity has [long been campaigning on](#).

(See also:

[Cancer patients face parking fees](#)

**Following revelations about the neglect and dysfunctional background of two young brothers from Doncaster who viciously attacked other children, Barnardos chief executive Martin Narey argues that [many more children need to be taken into care at birth](#) to stop them being damaged beyond repair by inadequate parents.** Mr Narey, made it clear he was not reacting to this case in particular, but to issues with Britain's child protection services that needed urgent attention to avoid failing many more troubled young people. He said he understood his views would be seen as 'illiberal heresy' but argued that if social workers were courageous and sought to intervene quickly, and were supported properly there would be far fewer problems.'

Philippa Stroud of the thinktank Centre for Social Justice reacted cautiously to Mr Narey's comments, arguing 'If the model is to move children very quickly to adoption, not necessarily from birth but certainly under a year, then that is something we would support.'

**A Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) project *'Mapping Qualifications and Training for the Children and Young People's Workforce'* aimed to produce a mapping of qualifications and training developments across the children and young people's (CYP) workforce to inform the development of an integrated qualifications framework (IQF). The project was commissioned as part of the Government's commitment to learn from the Victoria Climbié case and secure the service implementation of the Green Paper Every Child Matters which highlighted the imperative for children and young people's services to communicate effectively and work in an integrated way.**

The report [\*'Mapping Qualifications and Training for the Children and Young People's Workforce: research review'\*](#) which is available from the DCSF publications web-page, is an executive summary of the project as a whole and of the key findings of the research.

**The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre has published the [\*'CEOP Strategic Overview 2008-2009'\*](#) designed to inform the wider policing and child protection communities of the emerging trends and patterns of offender behaviour.** The review argues that child sex offenders are switching between the internet and the offline world with increasing frequency and severity in order to target and in some cases abduct young victims, and urges parents and carers to take note and to do more to protect children. CEOP have published a public version via podcasts and downloads to foster a wider understanding of how the threat manifests itself.

The CEOP explain that almost 5500 reports were received by the Centre during the past 12 months of which 2500 came from members of the public using the organisation's unique online "CEOP Report" button. 1373 of those reports were from young children themselves of which 89% related specifically to instances of grooming, and it is analysis of those reports that provide the basis for much of the organisation's increasing understanding.

(See:

[\*Uk's national centre for protecting children reveals latest trends in sexual offending\*](#)

**An article from the think-tank Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) [\*'We've had the third way, now for the third age'\*](#) argues that Britain is an ageing society, but there is a fundamental failure to adapt to our ageing population.** The article argues that public attitudes and Government policies that have seen ageing as an inevitable process of decline and dependence that we can do little about has meant that the way we organize society has not kept pace with the reality of people's lives. But, a glance around the world challenges the idea that old age is somehow an inevitable period of decline and unhappiness. Growing old is not the same everywhere you go.

**The House of Commons Public Accounts Select Committee report [\*'Supporting carers to care'\*](#) examines the steps the Department for Work and Pensions has taken to improve the delivery of benefits to carers and the support it provides to help them find employment.**

Edward Leigh MP, Chairman of the Committee of Public Accounts, argues 'millions of people devote a large part of their time, often for many years, to caring for family or friends who are ill or disabled, but the value of the service that these unpaid carers provide to society is not reflected in the quality of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) arrangements for providing them with financial and other support.

(See also:

[\*Committee report on carers published\*](#)

**A 'Memorandum of understanding (Memorandum) between the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts (Monitor)' has been published.** The document sets out the framework for the working relationship between the CQC and Monitor, and recognises that there is a distinct and unique relationship between the two regulators

**As a result of further quality assurance work , the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have published 'Place Survey: England - Headline Results 2008 (Revised)' to incorporate key amendments. The 2008 Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and the local services they receive, and the key points from the latest release include:-**

- 80 % of the population were satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 59 % felt they belong to their immediate neighbourhood
- 33 % agreed or strongly agreed that their local council provided value for money
- 45 % were, taking everything into account, satisfied with the way their local council runs things
- 29 % felt they could influence decisions in their local area
- 31 % of the population felt that there were problems with people in their local area not treating one another with respect and consideration
- 72 % felt that they were treated with respect and consideration by local services
- 76 % felt that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area.

The full statistical release and accompanying tables, including regional and local authority data, are available on the [DCLG publications and statistics](#) website.

**The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) have published their fourth thematic review 'Review of Public Service Regulators' which aims to review of public service regulators and explore ways of regulating effectively for sustainable development in the wider public sector.** The review concentrates on three sectors – health, education and local government – and assesses the work of the Audit Commission, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Healthcare Commission / Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England.

The report and other relevant documents are available on the [publications pages of the SDC website.](#)

(See also:

[Public sector regulation 'Vital to building a sustainable future'](#)  
[CQC 'not embracing sustainability'](#)

**Councils have been accused of failing to act on concerns raised by social workers about bad practices and barriers to doing their jobs.**

[The Local Government Chronicle](#) reports, that a survey conducted by the General Social Care Council (GSCC) found that 85% of social workers they report concerns over colleagues or work practices to employers. However, barely half said those fears were ever acted upon.

Fifty-one percent of respondents who had reported a concern to management said it had been acted upon, with the remainder saying it had not.

Meanwhile just 55% of social workers said they were "confident" that action would be taken if they spoke up.

**A new blueprint for councils who are buying services to help carers is published in a new Guide 'Commissioning for Carers'.**

Launched this week by the [Improvement and Development Agency \(IDeA\)](#), the guide aims to help local areas to meet new National Health Service and social care inspection expectations on carers.

The guide introduces a new model of comprehensive carer support in order to achieve the five outcomes for carers, as outlined in the vision of the 'National Carers Strategy'. This can be used by leaders to generate a strategic overview of current provision and unmet need

The guide is accompanied by a shorter Action Guide for Decision-Makers aimed at directors of adult services, Primary Care Trust (PCT) chief executives and elected members.

Key recommendations in the guide include:

- think 'carer' in all commissioning and area needs assessments (JSNAs)
- improve outcomes, independence and choices for both carers and those they care for
- involve carers of all groups and communities in decision-making and planning processes
- strengthen the carer support provider market, using a variety of funding approaches

(See:

[Commissioning for Carers](#)

[Commissioning for carers: action guide for decision-makers](#)

**A report published by the [NHS Confederation](#) in conjunction with the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign looks at how Primary Care Trusts can improve NHS services for disabled children**

The report, [Aiming high for disabled children: delivering improved health services](#), considers how PCTs can work in partnership with local organisations to deliver high quality care, which also provides value for money.

It contains a number of case studies examining PCT partnership initiatives with child disability groups which have improved the provision of equipment and services.

**Women's reluctance to seek help when they may be having a heart attack could be costing lives, a British Heart Foundation survey suggests.**

[The BBC](#) reports that one in three women mistakenly thought a heart attack must be accompanied by very severe chest pains. A similar number admitted they would avoid calling 999 if they had unusual chest pains.

A previous study found women put off dialling 999 for an average of 24 minutes longer than men after first experiencing heart attack symptoms - dramatically cutting their chances of survival

The fear of being embarrassed if their condition turned out to be trivial would put them off phoning, but experts warn it is vital to seek help without delay at the first sign of a possible heart attack.

According to the BHF, approximately 140 men and 110 women die every day in the UK from heart attacks. Of these, a third die before reaching hospital - often because they delayed seeking medical help.

**[The Treasury](#) has announced that from September 2009, the Government is making the first Child Trust Fund payments to 7 year olds.**

Over 700,000 children per year will benefit from the age-7 payments. Every child who turns 7 will receive £250 from the Government into their Child Trust Fund account.

Around one-third of 7 year olds will also receive the additional Government contribution of £250 for children in lower income families and children in care.

The Child Trust Fund is designed to:

- Strengthen the savings habit of future generations;
- Promote financial education; and
- Ensure that at age 18 every child will have access to a financial asset

Since they were launched in 2005, Child Trust Funds have helped over 4 million children across the UK start to save for their future. Around £2 billion is currently held in Child Trust Fund accounts.

**The Department of Health (DH) has published *Surveys for NHS Teen LifeCheck* that indicates social similarities and divides on some of the top teenage concerns.** The survey indicates that teens are most worried about losing weight and fitting in, and more teenagers from low income families worry about bullying, drugs, and smoking compared to peers from high income families. Further research also shows that almost half of teens don't feel they can talk to their friends about their worries because they think they'll be considered silly or different, and nearly a third feel that their friends just wouldn't understand.

The research was undertaken for the NHS Teen LifeCheck website on behalf of the Department of Health. This online service is aimed at teens with the highest risk of future ill health caused by their lifestyle choices. The website encourages them to complete its quiz and act on the results, and signposts people to support for issues like bullying.

(See:

[Top teen concerns are losing weight and fitting in TeenLifecheck](#)

**The Department of Health (DH) have released '*Diagnostics waiting times & activity data, month ending 31 July 2009 and quarterly census, period ending 30 June 2009*' which shows the NHS' progress in tackling the waiting times for diagnostic tests like scans.** This monthly data gives the waiting times for 15 key diagnostic tests carried out in the NHS and is published together with the latest quarterly census of all diagnostic tests, which picks up longer waits in areas outside the 15 monthly tests.

This data will help the NHS in delivering the 18 week maximum wait from GP to treatment, including all diagnostic tests, by end 2008.

The data is available on the [performance data and statistics pages](#) of the DH website.

(See also:

[Diagnostics waiting times & activity data, month ending 31 July 2009 and quarterly census, period ending 30 June 2009](#)

**The London Borough Councils are planning a Health Integration Board which would aim to stimulate better joint working between the councils and their respective Primary Care Trusts.**

Earlier in the year Hammersmith and Fulham LBC moved to a joint management structure with its PCT, and the Chief Executive took on a joint role heading the structure. It is hoped that lessons which have been learned from this will feed into the new board.

(See:

[Joint London Health Deal on the Table](#)

**The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have published guidance notes '[Ending Rough Sleeping by 2012: A Self Assessment Health Check](#)'.** The guidance is designed to be a self assessment good practice toolkit for local authorities to review with partners, what arrangements, interventions and services are in

place and to assess their current capability to prevent and respond to existing levels of rough sleeping, and explore the need for additional interventions or a separate rough sleeping strategy.

**In addition, DCLG have published [‘No One Left Out: Communities ending rough sleeping - Good Practice Notes: Developing a strategic response to prevent and tackle rough sleeping’](#).** These are guidance notes intended for local authorities who may traditionally not have experienced high numbers of people sleeping rough, or have in place significant levels of specialist provision, but who still need to adopt a strategic response to preventing rough sleeping

(See also:

[Homelessness figures down 32 %](#)

**The Department for Business and Skills (BIS) have published the 5<sup>th</sup> annual review of the International Network on Leave Policy [‘International review of leave policies and related research 2009’](#).** The International Network on Leave Policy has members and associates from 27 countries, mostly in Europe and a role which involves outlining leave entitlements, mainly for workers with dependant children. The review makes an international comparison of the various entitlements, and includes a country note on current leave policies in the 27 countries represented in the network on leave policy.

**The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) have published their fourth thematic review [‘Review of Public Service Regulators’](#) which aims to review of public service regulators and explore ways of regulating effectively for sustainable development in the wider public sector.** The review concentrates on three sectors – health, education and local government – and assesses the work of the Audit Commission, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Healthcare Commission / Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England.

The report and other relevant documents are available on the [publications pages of the SDC website](#).

(See also:

[Public sector regulation 'Vital to building a sustainable future'](#)

[CQC 'not embracing sustainability'](#)

**The NHS Quarter 1: April – June 2009 performance [report](#) indicates that the NHS has started 2009/10 in a strong position by sustaining delivery on key priorities such as reducing waiting times and healthcare associated infections (HCAIs), increasing access to primary care and maintaining good financial health.**

The highlights of the report indicate that:

- The NHS maintained delivery of the operational standard to treat all patients within 18 weeks.
- The NHS maintained delivery of the operational standard to treat all patients within 18 weeks from referral to treatment which came into effect from January 2009.
- The number of cases of healthcare associated infections continues to fall with a 39.3% reduction in MRSA infections compared to the same quarter last year -this is a 74% reduction against the 2003/04 baseline.
- The GP patient survey 2008/09 showed that 91% of patients rated their overall satisfaction with GP surgeries.
- Good progress continued to be made on offering extended opening hours in GP practices to over 77%, and a fourth successive quarter of improved access to dentistry.
- Robust emergency planning for a potential pandemic has enabled the effective transition from containment phase to treatment phase for tackling swine flu with the launch of the National Pandemic Flu Service.

(See also:

[The Quarter: quarter 1, 2009/10](#)

[NHS starts year in strong position](#)

In a speech at the Challenging Times conference, Sue Slipman, director of the Foundation Trust, put forward the argument 'that real autonomy will only be achieved if the whole asset base of foundation hospitals is managed within a charitable framework that protected them on behalf of the nation, enabled them to raise income from private patients and escape Government interference. Such a move could appeal to some hospitals because of the planned £20bn cut in NHS spending after 2011 and their desire to maintain their independence from Whitehall control'.

(See:

[NHS hospitals could become charities](#)

A Department of Health (DH) publication ['Information sharing and mental health: guidance to support information sharing by mental health services'](#) sets out guidance on some of the issues relating to the exchange of information between mental health trusts and outside organisations and individuals.

The guidance sets out when, why and how information can safely be exchanged for the benefit of the individual and the public.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) for Department of Health (DH) has published ['Exercise Prometheus: an 'off the shelf' Influenza Pandemic Desktop Exercise'](#) a DH funded exercise for the social care sector to assess and develop its resilience planning in readiness for a second wave of the pandemic swine flu. Designed as an 'off the shelf' package primarily for use by local authorities in partnership with their local providers of social care, the exercise has been developed by the Health Protection Agency from experience gained in previous pandemic influenza exercises.

Health Minister Ann Keen has announced that health and public sector professionals are being asked for their views on how the NHS can improve its services for women and girls who have been victims of violence and sexual assault.

The Minister argues that each year, across the UK, 3 million women experience violence including domestic violence, sexual violence, forced marriage and trafficking. In response to these issues, the Taskforce on the health aspects of violence against women and girls is holding a month long consultation to collect feedback from health and other public sector professionals who will be asked for their views on Health and public sector professionals will be asked for their views on areas including:

- Service delivery - early identification, access to healthcare services, staff awareness and attitudes maximising NHS resources.
- Service commissioning – needs assessment, NHS commissioning, joint commissioning, commissioning from non-NHS providers.
- Partnership working – information sharing, service level agreements and protocols, collaborative service delivery.

(See:

[Health and public sector professionals to help improve health services for victims of domestic violence](#)

[Health and public sector professionals to help improve health services for victims of domestic violence: press release](#)

The Department of Health (DOH) have produced a toolkit '*Your health, your way: a guide to long term conditions and self care - communications toolkit*' which aims to

**provide all of the assets and artwork to enable a communications campaign to be implemented at local level.** The toolkit and relevant documents are available on the [new publications web page of the DOH website.](#)

## **Forthcoming Parliamentary Business**

**The House of Commons and House of Lords are both on summer recess until Monday 12 October 2009**

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