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## Health Information Bulletin No. 37 / 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

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### Health in Kent

**As part of the NHS reform, NHS South of England, made up of NHS South Central, NHS South East Coast and NHS South West has officially come into effect.**

The new 'cluster' organisation held its first Board meeting in Newbury, confirming Dr Geoff Harris as Chair and Sir Ian Carruthers OBE as Chief Executive, as well as all other Board members.

The four strategic health authority clusters are NHS South of England, NHS London, NHS North of England and NHS Midlands. They have been formed from the previous 10 SHAs in England in order to ensure the organisations are well-placed to continue to improve NHS performance and deliver the NHS reforms during this period of transition. .

From 31 March 2013 the strategic health authorities will be succeeded by a new NHS Commissioning Board, working with local clinical commissioning groups, led by GPs.

See:

[NHS South of England launched](#)

### Department of Health

**The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has launched the first national survey to measure experiences of care at the end of life.**

The survey, which is commissioned by the Department of Health (DOH) as part of the 'End of life care strategy' is designed to provide important information for the key services – the NHS, care homes and hospices - that care for people at the end of their lives and to help improve people's experiences at this sensitive time.

The survey will run from 25 October 2011 to the end of January 2012. The findings from the survey will be made available by the end of March 2012.

See:

[ONS launches new survey to measure care at end of life](#)

[VOICES Redesign and testing to inform a national end of life care survey](#)

[End of Life Care Strategy - promoting high quality care for all adults at the end of life](#)

**The Department of Health has produced a report on the annual reports of the Local Involvement Networks for 2010/11.**

[This report](#) brings together information on resources, activity and outcomes from the Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) annual reports of 2010/11, including comparisons to 2009/10 and 2008/09. It includes case studies highlighting activity of some LINKs during 2010/11 and a quantification of the value of LINKs.

**The recommendations from the NHS prosthetics services review have been supported by Government, and the Prime Minister has announced an investment of up to £15 million to improve NHS prosthetics services for military veterans who have lost a limb due to activities while serving their country.**

In response to Dr Murrison's key recommendation, the Department of Health will now introduce a number of national specialist prosthetic and rehabilitation centres for amputee veterans across the country.

See:

[New NHS treatment centres for military heroes](#)

[Improved prosthetics services for military veterans](#)

**The Department of Health (DOH) has published the response to the Offender Personality Disorder consultation, which closed on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 and was jointly published with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).**

The consultation '[Consultation on the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway Implementation Plan](#)' requested responses regarding a new pathway approach for the treatment and management of offenders with serious personality disorders.

The consultation response describes the responses and sets out the next steps in developing services for offenders with severe personality disorders in the NHS and Criminal Justice System.

See:

[Response to the offender personality disorder consultation](#)

[Consultation on the joint Department of Health / NOMS Offender Personality Disorder Pathway Implementation Plan](#)

[Written Ministerial Statement](#)

**The Department of Health (DOH) has released a guidance document assessing the flu vaccine strategic reserve in England.**

The document '[Assessing the flu vaccine strategic reserve in England](#)' describes the circumstances under which the national flu vaccine strategic reserve will be made available to the NHS in England and how these vaccines can be ordered through ImmForm.

See:

[Assessing the flu vaccine strategic reserve in England](#)

**A review of the evidence for breast screening in the UK is being undertaken amid a serious controversy about its effectiveness**

The NHS says that 1,400 lives are saved through [screening](#) in England alone, and the World Health Organization estimates that screening reduced deaths from breast cancer by about 35%.

However, other researchers claim that it may cause more harm than good. While helping doctors make a diagnosis sooner, there is also the risk of diagnosing someone with cancer when they are healthy

Screening was introduced for breast cancer in 1988 in the UK and now offers tests to women, over the age of 50, every three years

## Government

### **Some councils guilty of "hopeless short termism", says Care Services Minister.**

[The Guardian reports](#) a speech by Paul Burstow to the National Children and Adult Services conference in London. He said that if sector led improvement in social care services is to be achieved then local authorities need to be their own "sternest critics".

Mr Burstow added that a number of councils have made good decisions during "tough times" in social care, but there are some which are still not delivering important changes. He concluded that: "No one will thank us if because we are on the cusp of major reform we stop doing and pursuing the things that we know make meaningful and positive changes."

### **Changes to the NHS Constitution announced today will protect staff who raise concerns about poor patient care**

Following a public consultation on whistle-blowing and the [NHS Constitution](#), the changes make it clear that it is the duty of all NHS workers to report bad practice or any mistreatment of patients. The associated guidelines will also encourage more staff to come forward with concerns

The outcome of the consultation is set out in a [report](#) that includes the full revised text of the amendments to the Constitution.

### **The Government has announced an investment of £32 million in psychological therapies, including talking therapies, for children and young people with mental health problems.**

The Government has requested that universities and teaching providers link up with local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) partnerships to transform services for children and young people's mental health.

Figures indicate that one in ten children aged 5-16 years has a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, and at any one time, more than a million children will have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Such disorders and mental illness in childhood and adolescence costs up to £59,000 per child every year, so the Government argues that giving children the right help early on can provide better chances of finding a job and reduce the likelihood of them ending up in prison.

See:

[Improved mental health therapies for children](#)

[Government to invest £32 million in psychological therapies for children and young people](#)

### **Edward Timpson, a backbench MP argues that there is a growing body of evidence to suggest unequal treatment of care leavers by local authorities.**

Mr. Timpson was addressing an audience of care leavers in his role as chair of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) for looked-after children and care leavers, and said that he would write to the minister for children and families, Tim Loughton, to try and ensure the inequalities are addressed

See:

[Lack of equality for care leavers](#)

# Parliament

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Monday 17th October 2011.

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**Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2011.**

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[Domestic violence, crime and victims \(amendment\) Bill](#)

[Contaminated blood \(support for infected and bereaved persons \) Bill](#)

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**HOUSE OF LORDS**

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**Written Answers**

[Health: Contaminated Blood Products](#) – *Question*

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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**Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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**Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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**Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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**Andy Burnham, Shadow Secretary of State for Health, moved an Opposition day debate in the House of Commons on 26 October 2011 on the Government's record on the National Health Service.**

The motion called on the Government to drop the Health and Social Care Bill, which is currently under consideration in the House of Lords and “accept the offer of cross-party talks on reforming NHS commissioning.

See:

[Opposition day debate on the Government's record on the NHS](#)

## **Care Quality Commission**

**The Care Quality Commission will not move ahead with its proposed adult social care excellence award following its consultation exercise.**

[The CQC](#) said that it had received good feedback on the concept, but that there were problems with how it would be implemented.

## Other Health Information

**Recent figures suggest that Britain is divided by life expectancy, and indicate that children born in southern England can expect a longer life than those in Scotland and northern England.**

Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggest that there is now a gap of up to 13 years in life expectancy between the more prosperous and deprived areas of Britain.

See:

[Britain divided by life expectancy](#)

**Following the implementation of a new monitoring system, figures suggest that there has been a drop in mixed-sex ward accommodation breaches.**

*AgeUK* report that since a new monitoring system came into force at the end of last year, the rule breaches relating to mixed-sex accommodation in NHS wards has dropped from the August figure of 1,092 rule breaches to 1,079 rules breaches for September.

See:

[Drop in mixed-sex ward rule breaches](#)

**A Canadian cardiologist argues that people can expect to live an additional 40 or 50 years after the age of 50 if they follow seven simple steps.**

Dr Clyde Yancy, a lecturer at the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, says people can achieve optimal health by:

- Getting active.
- Knowing and controlling cholesterol levels.
- Following a healthy diet.
- Knowing and controlling blood pressure.
- Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.
- Managing diabetes.
- Giving up smoking

Dr. Yancy argues that simple strategies which focus on those areas save the economy billions of dollars in health costs by preventing heart disease and strokes.

See:

[Seven steps to heart health are on the money](#)

**The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) argue that new research indicates how the benefits of virtual worlds can assist autistic children develop social skills.**

The new ERSC research 'Echoes project' develops an interactive environment which uses multi-touch screen technology where virtual characters on the screener act to children's actions in real time. During sessions in the virtual environment, primary school children experiment with different social scenarios, allowing the researchers to compare their reactions with those they display in real-world situations.

See:

[Digital worlds can help autistic children to develop social skills](#)

**The Sue Ryder Foundation has commissioned a report which calls for more resident involvement in how care homes are run as part of the move to ensure that services fit with the needs and choices of their residents.**

The report, [Tailor Made](#), has been published by Demos and looks at what needs to be done, following on from personal budgets, to improve personalisation in care services. It looks at the challenges caused by the cuts to local authority budgets combined with the move to increase personalisation and warns that personal budgets are not the complete answer.

Services should be run for and by the residents as “micro-communities”, and it is important that there should be a positive staff culture, and that a high turnover of staff causes obstacles in the build-up of relationships which residents find important; it suggests that recruitment should be geared to finding staff

[BBC coverage](#)

**Research shows that at least 47 children’s centres have been closed or are being closed due to funding cuts**

Of the 152 local authorities sent Freedom of Information requests, only 92 were able to say whether they were planning closures or not. The rest answered questions on the [children's centre budgets](#).

The survey by shadow children's minister Sharon Hodgson also suggests eight out of 10 of those who responded have cut funding in the past year. A further nine out of 10 are planning to do so in 2012. There are about 3,600 children's centres in England, half of which are in the most deprived areas.

**A report shows that new computer systems could help prevent deaths in hospitals**

Systems such as a computer that issues reminders to staff to give patients their drugs, and warnings to prevent prescriptions which could harm patients may help prevent 16,000 deaths a year.

[University Hospitals Birmingham’s](#) IT system was recommended to the team investigating above-average death rates from 2005 to 2008 at Stafford Hospital. The trust says it saw a 17% fall in deaths among emergency patients over 12 months, as the report shows that the use of IT had helped to halve medication errors, and prevent medications being missed.

IT surveillance also covered falls, checks for blood-clots and infection control

**GPs are striking off badly behaved patients without adequate warning**

[Health Service Ombudsman](#) says the NHS is failing to deal adequately with complaints and many minor disputes were escalating, leading in some cases whole families have been struck off, because of one abusive family member.

The Ombudsman handled more than 15,000 complaints in 2010-11, but two-thirds went back to the local area for adjudication.

See also:

[NHS Confederation statement on health ombudsman report](#)

**A new survey of young people has found that they would like more protection from alcohol advertising with more than half of respondents saying that there should be a 9pm watershed before which such advertising should not be shown on television.**

Television was by far the most frequent place that young people had seen adverts for alcohol, but only half recognised that music festivals and football shirts also have sponsorship from drinks companies. The report, [Overexposed and Overlooked: young people’s views on the regulation of alcohol promotion](#), also found that respondents were split between Government and a body comprising

members of Government and the alcohol industry as being the best body to regulate the content of alcohol advertising.

Also see:

[Alcohol Concern Press Release](#)

**Further research has been published suggesting there is no link between mobile phones and brain cancer.**

The risk mobiles present has been much debated over the past 20 years as use of the phones has soared. The latest study led by the Institute of Cancer Epidemiology in Denmark looked at more than 350,000 people with mobile phones over an 18-year period.

Researchers concluded users were at no greater risk than anyone else of developing brain cancer. The findings, [published on the British Medical Journal website](#), come after a series of studies have come to similar conclusions.

Read the full text of the report:

[Use of mobile phones and risk of brain tumours: update of Danish cohort study](#)

See also:

[Mobile phone brain cancer link rejected](#)

**A joint audit from the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has released a report on the outcomes of elective surgery in NHS hospitals and dedicated independent sector units.**

The [‘Patient Outcomes in Surgery audit: a report comparing independent sector treatment centres and NHS providers’](#) describes the result of the audit, and argues that NHS patients undergoing elective operations in dedicated independent sector units report better outcomes than those seen by NHS Hospitals treating emergency and elective patients.

See:

[Comparative audit of independent sector centres and NHS hospitals published by RCS](#)

**A report from the Taxpayers Alliance compares the poor performance of the NHS when compared to European peers.**

The report [‘Wasting lives 2011: a statistical analysis of NHS performance since 1981’](#) argues that compared with the European model of mortality amenable to healthcare, which details the number of deaths from certain conditions, and at certain ages, that healthcare can reasonably be expected to avert, the NHS performance is poor, despite huge increases in funding over the last decade.

**A joint statement from the major health bodies and local government issued at the National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC) sets out a shared position on the future design of public health in England.**

The joint statement made by the Local Government Association (LGA), Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), the Faculty of Public Health, and the NHS Confederation, sets out 12 areas of common ground agreement intended to shape future national discussion on legislation, guidance and implementation of the wide ranging proposed Government public health reforms, and which represent the return of key areas of health to the remit of local government by April 2013.

Cllr David Rogers, Chairman of the Local Government Association's GP and Public Health Stakeholder Group, said:

'Local authorities are best placed to understand the challenges of key areas of public health, which has been the core business of local government since its foundation. As providers of services such as housing, transport and leisure, councils are well placed to address the wider determinants of health.

See:

[Health groups and local government outline vision for public health success](#)

**An article in *Public Service* argues that researchers from University College, London have found that health data is being lost because smoking is not used as the cause of death on death certificates.**

Researchers found that of the 2,129 death certificates that the University College London Hospital produced in the six years up to 2009 just 0.1 % listed smoking as the principal cause of death. In addition, smoking was cited as a contributory factor in only 0.5 % of cases.

However, where alcohol was a direct or contributory cause of death, 57 per cent of death certificates showed this.

See:

[Smoking rarely named as cause of death](#)

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