



## News

### 1. What's going on in the LINK?

#### i) Want to get more involved in the LINK?

LINK participants can get involved in LINK activities as much or as little as they like. For example:

- just receiving information
- telling the LINK about their experiences (good and perhaps not so good) of using NHS and social care services in Medway
- raising an issue which you may want the LINK to take some action on - but not a complaint which requires investigating someone's personal experience
- becoming one of the LINK's pool of visitors or mystery shoppers
- joining one of the LINK's panels that consider issues and help to keep the LINK on track in terms of its organisation and finances
- representing the LINK on a health or social care group that is wanting to improve services
- coming to one of the LINK's events when they are held near to you
- networking / sharing your experience with other LINK participants who have a shared interest in the topics that interest you.

If you would like to get more involved, why not contact one of the LINK workers in your area to discuss what might suit you. They are:

- Jane Williamson      email: jane.williamson5@btinternet.com      tel: 07968 056285
- Graham Hills        email: graham@kmn-ltd.co.uk                              tel: 07817 536877

#### ii) LINK Quarterly Event - Gillingham

Medway LINK participants packed into the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham on the evening of Tuesday, 27 October 2009.

Marion Dinwoodie, Chief Executive, NHS Medway, gave an address and answered participants' questions on a wide range of issues, which included:

- Adverse health outcomes in Central Chatham and Gillingham and the need for the NHS to concentrate resources there. Marion told her audience of investment in new health facilities in Balmoral Gardens and in Canterbury Street, Gillingham.
- A user of physiotherapy services who had recently had orthopaedic surgery was critical of post operative care which is so vital to aid recovery. Marion agreed to look into this issue.
- What was the NHS doing to help combat obesity which was so evident in Medway? Should the NHS be working more with these families and in schools? Marion said that schemes were in place – including family training sessions around such things as exercise and nutrition. The age group, forty plus, will be offered a health check every 5 years which will include health issues related to obesity.



- Marion was challenged that not enough funding was taking place to re-educate Medway people and was there to be a change of direction. Marion indicated that Chatham would be targeted in 2010.
- More should be done to combat hospital infections. Marion stated that this has improved significantly since February 2009. NHS Medway was working closely with those at Medway Maritime Hospital.
- It was noted that NHS Medway was running a number of pilot schemes, but what happens when the pilot comes to an end? Marion indicated that the funds were non-recurring.
- Controversially, teenage pregnancy amongst those with a learning disability was raised which often resulted in those children being taken into care. It was asked what support was available for these people. Marion said she didn't know but people with learning disabilities are treated with the same degree of care as any one else with respect to their health care.
- Mention was made of the newly established health trainers – NHS Medway and Medway Council were working together to target areas of deprivation.
- In her address, Marion indicated that dramatic savings needed to be made – how and where? She indicated that productivity and taking capacity out of the system. By improving primary care and stopping the onward transition through the service into hospital in the first place, the money will go further.

Also in attendance was Andy Horne, Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust, which manages Medway Maritime Hospital. He told the meeting that with regard to rehabilitation services they were now offering a six day a week service, soon to be a seven day service. With regard to infection control the hospital now has exceptional results - but there were still improvements to be made.

### **Big Care Debate**

Following Marion Dinwoodie's session, LINK participants engaged in some vigorous discussion about the Government's Green Paper, 'Shaping the future of care together: The National Care Service and National Carers Strategy'. Issues around benefits and whether people should have to sell their homes to pay for care engendered a good deal of discussion. The options on funding were: whether there should be a partnership in meeting the cost of care between those receiving care and the State, whether an insurance based system should be introduced with those able to afford it paying premiums and Government national insurance type scheme should be introduced.

From this discussion a LINK response is to be compiled. The consultation ends on 13 November 2009. If you want to have your views included, there is still just time to do so.

### **iii) Care Quality Commission to give feedback to Medway LINK**

If you contributed to the LINK's commentary on health care standards in Medway earlier this year, you are warmly invited to a meeting with representatives of the Care Quality Commission between 10.00am and 12.00noon on Friday, 27 November 2009 in the Trafalgar

# **MEDWAY LINK Bulletin**

**Supported by Kent & Medway Networks**

**6 November 2009 - Issue 20**



Room, The King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 5QT.

The Care Quality Commission wants to feedback to the LINK what it did with the LINK's comments on health care standards in Medway.

If you wish to come to this meeting, please book your place with Kirsty by email at [kirsty@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:kirsty@kmn-ltd.co.uk) or telephone 01634 821135.

#### **iv) LINK participant calls for investigation of services for diabetics in Medway**

The LINK's Moderating Panel is continuing to meet monthly to consider issues brought to the LINK by its participants. Most recently the Panel has considered a request for the LINK to investigate the arrangements for commissioning services for diabetics in the Medway area.

Another new issue raised by participants with the LINK is a report compiled by Christchurch University at Canterbury on restorative justice in prisons.

#### **v) Speech and Language Therapy Services review**

In response to concerns raised by LINK participants about waiting times for assessment and therapy, NHS Medway is conducting a review of its Speech and Language Therapy Service.

In the work so far they have taken account of issues from a parent / carer perspective in two ways. Firstly, through discussions with Medway LINK and secondly through telephone interviews with a sample of parents / carers of children who currently use services.

They now want to meet with a wider group of people to discuss their findings so far, to ensure they have understood the issues fully. This will then help them decide what changes should be made to the service to deliver improvements for people in Medway and those outside the area that use these services.

The meeting will be held from 9.00am to 12.00noon on 9 November 2009 at Pilkington Building, University of Kent, Chatham Maritime, ME4 6DW.

Numbers need to be limited to 50 people, but they would like to involve as many parents / carers as possible to ensure their proposals for change are fully informed from service user's perspectives.

If you are a user, carer or parent of someone who uses these services and want to attend this workshop, please contact Derek Hoddinott by email [derek.hoddinott@medwaypct.nhs.uk](mailto:derek.hoddinott@medwaypct.nhs.uk) or telephone 01634 335287 / 07506 672604.

---

## **2. A chance to have your say in the commissioning of health and social care services in Medway**

The Medway LINK would like to invite two participants to join the Medway LINK's Local

# MEDWAY LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

6 November 2009 - Issue 20



Development Worker, Jane Williamson, to attend the NHS Medway Stakeholder Event on Wednesday, 11 November 2009.

Due to the financial downturn affecting the whole country, NHS Medway are going to be looking at ways to reduce spending in the health and social care systems without compromising quality of care and productivity. There will be debates and discussions on potential options that could help both the health and social care systems improve efficiency, productivity and quality in light of financial pressures resulting from expected cuts in public expenditure.

Marion Dinwoodie, Chief Executive, NHS Medway, will be introducing the event which also includes a brief talk from Helen Buckingham, Director of Commissioning at NHS Medway.

The event is being held at the Corn Exchange, Northgate, Rochester, ME1 1LS from 9.30am - 4.30pm with lunch and refreshments provided. (Expenses are reimbursable for attending this event).

If you would like to attend, contact Kirsty as soon as possible by email [kirsty@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:kirsty@kmn-ltd.co.uk) or telephone 01634 821135. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

---

### 3. Complaints and PALS move

The Customer Services Team (Complaints and the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)) at NHS Medway has moved to 50 Pembroke Court, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, ME4 4EL.

The new details for the Customer Services Team will be:

- Emma McCabe, Customer Care Manager  
Tel: 01634 335053
- Catherine Emery, Complaints and Governance Administrator  
Tel: 01634 335054 and 0800 0141 634
- Bobbie Walkem-Smith, PALS Officer  
Tel: 01634 335057 and 0800 0141 641
- Saf haven Customer Services  
Fax: 01634 335275

For further information contact Emma Burns, NHS Medway by email [emma.burns@nhs.net](mailto:emma.burns@nhs.net) or telephone 01634 335219 or 07939 235402.

---

### 4. Views help to improve Medway's dermatology services

People treated with skin conditions within Medway have lent their voices in helping to shape



the service's future. An event on 14 October 2009 gave people using Medway's dermatology service the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and with GPs, hospital consultants and professionals who plan and pay for services. Nearly 60 people, of whom 24 were patients, attended the day in Rochester, led by NHS Medway, who plan and pay for services and the Chatham GP Practice Based Commissioning locality board.

Throughout the day a series of patient workshops, presentations and group discussions were held around dermatology services in Medway, which patients within NHS West Kent and Swale, part of NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, can also access. This was followed by a discussion on how the service could be developed within the community, making it easier and more convenient for people who are treated for skin conditions.

One patient said: "I didn't know what to expect but I'm really glad that we came and had the chance to talk about our experience".

Dr Mehdi Dabestani, GP Chair of the Chatham locality board said: "We wanted to involve service users in developing our dermatology services and this was a fantastic opportunity for patients to tell us about their experiences of dermatology. We look forward to continuing to involve patients in this project as it moves forward."

The information shared by patients will now be used to review and develop the dermatology services in collaboration with local hospitals, consultants and other health professionals.

A report from the event will be shared with everyone who attended the meeting.

Medway NHS Foundation Trust has recently appointed more consultant dermatologists, increasing the number available from four to eight.

For further information contact Emma Burns, NHS Medway by email [emma.burns@nhs.net](mailto:emma.burns@nhs.net) or telephone 01634 335219 or 07939 235402.

---

## 5. Make sure you're registered with a GP, Medway people urged

People in Medway are being urged to make sure they are registered with a GP so they can get a Swine Flu vaccination if they need one.

The call comes after it was agreed that GP surgeries will administer the national Swine Flu immunisation programme. GP practices already regularly call in patients for seasonal flu and other vaccinations.

Medway Director of Public Health, Dr Alison Barnett, said: "I urge anyone in Medway who has not yet registered with a GP to do so. Only people who are registered with a GP will be offered immunisation, which will be focused so that protection is offered to those who most need it."

The groups which will be targeted are (in order of priority):

- people aged over six months and under 65 years in the current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at-risk groups
- all pregnant women, subject to licensing conditions on trimesters
- household contacts of people with compromised immune systems eg people on treatment for cancer
- people aged 65 and over in the current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at-risk groups. This does not include otherwise healthy over 65s, since they appear to have some natural immunity to the virus.

Frontline health and social care workers will be offered the vaccine at the same time as the first clinical at-risk groups.

Decisions on vaccinating the wider, healthy population will depend on the evolution of the pandemic as well as new and emerging clinical data on the use of the vaccine. This will be kept under close review.

Dr Barnett added: "We would advise people to prepare for the likely increase in the number of cases of Swine Flu by ensuring they have over-the-counter remedies at home and by identifying a flu friend - someone who does not have Swine Flu - who can pick up their antivirals and any other supplies for them should they become ill."

"The best way people can continue to protect themselves is by following good hygiene - always use a tissue to catch your sneezes, throw away used tissues where germs can linger and regularly wash your hands. Simply remember: Catch It, Bin It, Kill It."

Typical symptoms of Swine Flu are sudden fever (a temperature of 38C / 100.4F or above), and sudden cough. Other symptoms may include headaches, tiredness, chills, aching muscles, limb or joint pain, diarrhoea or stomach upset, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and loss of appetite.

To check symptoms visit the National Pandemic Flu Service website at [www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu) or telephone 0800 1 513 100 or textphone 0800 1 513 200.

People should phone their doctor direct rather than using the National Pandemic Flu Service if:

- they have a serious underlying illness
- they are pregnant
- they have a sick child under one year old
- their condition suddenly gets much worse
- their condition is still getting worse after seven days (five days for a child).



## **6. College Health at Boots becomes first Medway GP surgery to offer 'C' card scheme**

Access to confidential sexual health advice, free condoms and Chlamydia screening just got easier with the launch of the first GP surgery in Medway to offer the 'C' Card scheme.

From 5 October 2009 College Health Surgery in Boots at the Pentagon Centre, Chatham, will offer its registered patients the 'C' Card scheme along with Chlamydia screening. Medway's 'C' Card scheme is a free and confidential co-ordinated condom distribution network for Medway's 13 to 20 year olds.

The scheme's launch at the surgery in Boots will give young people improved access to Medway's 'C' Card; something which was asked for following a series of inspections throughout the summer led by Young Inspectors aged between 13 and 19 years old and up to 25 years old for those with disabilities and / or learning disabilities.

The Young Inspectors' report highlighted the need to increase places offering the scheme, including GP surgeries, schools and youth centres.

Jinny Robinson, Medway's Pregnancy Strategic Co-ordinator, said: "I am delighted to welcome College Health to the 'C' Card scheme. The 'C' Card scheme is a key part of The Medway Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and I hope that this will encourage more GP practices to sign up to the scheme."

The Young Inspectors programme gives young people and their peers the opportunity to influence local policies and services across a variety of issues including health, transport, information, advice and community services. Young Inspectors are recruited from a range of backgrounds including children in care, those who have disabilities, the homeless, travellers, young parents and youth offenders.

For further information contact Emma Burns, NHS Medway by email [emma.burns@nhs.net](mailto:emma.burns@nhs.net) or telephone 01634 335219 or 07939 235402.

---

## **7. West Kent CareCall**

West Kent CareCall is a telephone-based support service run by experienced, registered nurses. It is a personalised service that provides information for patients aged 16 and over registered at participating GP practices, and it has been introduced to help these patients play a more active role in their health care.

The service, which was launched in April 2009, provides information and support to patients who may want help in making informed decisions about different therapies or treatment options, as well as those who may want to make the most of their GP consultations or who would like support in managing their long term conditions.



CareCall is very keen to work with the voluntary sector; both to promote services provided by the voluntary sector to the relevant patients and to establish a referral service for voluntary sector staff, for those who feel they could benefit from using the CareCall service.

For further information about CareCall contact Barbara Everett, NHS West Kent Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, email [barbaraeverett@nhs.net](mailto:barbaraeverett@nhs.net) or telephone 07802 331027.

---

## 8. Epilepsy Support Group for Maidstone

Judie Butler, a participant of the Kent LINK, would like to start a support group for those who have Epilepsy in the Maidstone area. The group will meet informally for coffee and a chat. The idea is to support sufferers and their carers. Epilepsy Action will support Judie and will be on hand to provide practical advice about the condition. Judie hopes this will provide a social network for those with the condition in the area.

For more information contact Judie Butler, 2 Lushington Road, Ringlestone, Maidstone, ME14 2QS, email [Judie.ox@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Judie.ox@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone 01622 206929

---

## 9. GP comparison service launched on NHS Choices website

The Department of Health has launched an online service that allows patients to rate their GPs. Patients can comment on how easy it is to get an appointment, recommend their local medical centre or criticise it, although abusive comments and those that mention staff by name will be removed. The tool, which is part of the NHS Choices website, is similar to the hospital comparison service launched in the summer. Health minister Mike O'Brien said: "It will help drive up quality across the board, and is another step in ensuring we have a modern NHS which reflects the needs of the patient."

Family Doctor Association Chairman, Dr Peter Swinyard, said: "Patient feedback on GP services is an effective way of driving up the standards of primary care even further."

---

## 10. Health information for blind and partially sighted people

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has published research, conducted by Dr Foster Intelligence, into the experiences of blind and partially sighted people who had used NHS services in a twelve month period across the UK.

The research has highlighted that barriers to health information remain widespread, and that more progress needs to be made to ensure that health information is accessible to blind and partially sighted people.



## Summary and recommendations:

- Blind and partially sighted people want to be able to read their own health information so they can manage their personal health care. They often cannot do this because health professionals do not ask them what format they need and they themselves often do not feel empowered to ask for it as a right.
- Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Health Boards who buy health services should specify a requirement for providers to meet the health information needs of blind and partially sighted people, and assess their performance on this.
- Commissioners and providers should actively promote policies and guidance on how to meet the information needs of blind and partially sighted people, and ensure these policies are implemented.
- PCTs and Health Boards should ensure electronic record systems used by service providers are capable of recording patients' needs for accessible information and can produce personal and general health information in appropriate formats.
- All healthcare professionals need to identify each individual's needs, record their reading requirements and ensure that accessible information is provided.

This is only a summary of the report; to receive a copy of the full Dr. Foster Research Report, contact Hugh Huddy by email [Hugh.huddy@rnib.org.uk](mailto:Hugh.huddy@rnib.org.uk) or telephone 0207 391 2008.

Please state which format you require: PDF or Word document by email, hardcopy in clear print or large print, Braille, audio on CD or MP3.

---

## 11. 'Bringing our work to life'

A new broadband TV service has been launched, aimed at the Social Care workforce.

Social Care is taking a starring role in a series of 'TV films' intended to show the realities of the sector. Whether you are a professional, student, carer, service user or just someone who wants to learn more about social care, this new service should have something to help you.

Social Care TV, managed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is a first for the sector. The intention is that the good practice suggestions and discussion points will act as an exciting addition to current good practice materials.

The first set of 25 films covers eight social care topics from dementia to the children of prisoners. Each film tells a social care story often from the point of view of people who use services.

Each film forms part of a web page with lots of guidance and advice and e-learning resources. Plus, there's a clever technical bit that will make 'good practice sharing' more efficient because users can watch segments of films by going to a specific point in the film to address a key issue in social care practice. They can also email that segment or a whole film to a colleague.



For more details visit the website:  
[www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv](http://www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv)

---

## 12. NHS to ban premium rate numbers

Premium rate telephone numbers will be banned for all lines used by patients and the public to contact the NHS, Health Minister Mike O'Brien, has announced.

A public consultation was carried out and almost 3,000 members of the public responded, demonstrating the level of feeling on the subject.

"For people on low incomes, and for those who need to contact their local doctor or hospital regularly, these costs can soon build up. We want to reassure the public that when they contact their local GP or hospital, the cost of their call will be no more expensive than if they had dialled a normal landline number." said Health Minister Mike O'Brien.

The British Medical Association's GP Committee and the Department of Health will co-operate over the next few months to bring in the legislative changes to the GP contracts.

Deputy Chairman of the BMA's GPs Committee, Dr Richard Vautrey, said: "Patients who call their surgery because they're ill shouldn't be penalised because they have to call an 084 number, so we're pleased that the phone companies who supply these lines to practices have agreed to ensure that their tariffs are in line with local charges."

---

## Consultations

### 1. Online petition to Prime Minister to support carers

Maidstone Carers Project is promoting a petition to Government over the use of money by Primary Care Trusts said to have been allocated to support carers. The petition reads: "We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to ensure the additional £150 million that has been allocated to Primary Care Trusts by Government to fund breaks for carers is used for this purpose and not subsumed into baseline budgets."

Further information on the petition can be obtained by telephone 01622 685276, email [barbara.hagan@vam-online.org.uk](mailto:barbara.hagan@vam-online.org.uk) or [carers@vam-online.org.uk](mailto:carers@vam-online.org.uk) or visit the website: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/pct-carersbreaks/>

This issue, which has also been brought to the attention of the Kent and Medway LINKs, will be considered by their appropriate panels during November 2009.

If you have a view on this issue which you would like the LINK to consider, telephone



01303 297050 or 01634 821135 or your views can be posted on the LINK websites at:  
[www.thekentlink.co.uk](http://www.thekentlink.co.uk) or [www.themedwaylink.co.uk](http://www.themedwaylink.co.uk)

---

## 2. Policy and procedure on 'Being open' when patients are harmed

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust has invited the LINK to comment on the review of the above policy. 'Being open' is about effective communication and is a vital part of the process of dealing with errors or problems within NHS treatment.

At the Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, staff are said to be working hard to deliver the highest standards of healthcare to all patients. Although they provide safe and effective care to many thousands of people every year, sometimes, despite their best efforts, things can and do go wrong. If a patient is harmed whilst receiving their care, they believe that they, their family or those who care for them, should receive an apology, be kept fully informed as to what has happened, have their questions answered and know what action is being taken in response. They call this 'Being open' and therefore invite comments from their patients for this review.

For more information and to get involved in the consultation contact Wendy Bates, Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, ME16 9QQ, email [wendybates@nhs.net](mailto:wendybates@nhs.net) or telephone 01622 222019 or 07525 968970.

---

## 3. Consultation on direct payments for health care

Direct payments for health care has moved a step closer with a new consultation launched by Care Services Minister, Phil Hope. The consultation started on 23 October 2009 and runs until 8 January 2010. Personal health budgets are being piloted in primary care trusts until 2012. NHS Medway has been selected as one such pilot site – they will be piloting personal health budgets for end of life care. Personal health budgets will help to create a more personalised NHS, by giving people more choice and control over how money is spent on their care. The three ways that a personal health budget can work are:

- a notional budget held by a commissioner, such as their doctor or primary care trust
- a budget managed on the individual's behalf by a third party, like a charity or User Trust
- a cash payment to an individual and managed by them.

For more information contact Gina Walton, Eversley House, 19 Horn Street, Seabrook, Hythe, CT21 5SB, telephone 01303 717029 or 07789 750943, email [georgina.walton@kent.gov.uk](mailto:georgina.walton@kent.gov.uk) or [personalhealthbudgets@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:personalhealthbudgets@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

# **MEDWAY LINK Bulletin**

**Supported by Kent & Medway Networks**

**6 November 2009 - Issue 20**



**a Local Involvement Network**

---

## **Contact Information**

**The Medway LINK may be contacted via the Host Organisation as below:**

KMN, Avenue Business Centre, 17 New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6BA.

Email: [info@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@kmn-ltd.co.uk)

Tel: 01634 821135

SMS Text: 07976 596913

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm  
(Answerphone available out of office hours)