

News

1. What's going on in the LINK?

a) **Volunteers required**

As the LINK's activities continue to increase there is a need for more willing volunteers (expenses are paid!) to take on the roles of:

- LINK Authorised Visitors
- Mystery Shoppers
- LINK Representatives on external NHS and social care commissioning and service provider groups
- Members of LINK panels.

The LINK will be holding a Selection / Information Day on Thursday, 8 April 2010 at the King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, ME7 5QT which will enable potential volunteers to find out more about the LINK and the above roles.

If you have some time to spare and want to get a bit more involved in LINK activities, why not come along to the above event, lunch will be served and travel expenses reimbursed.

To book your place contact us by email at info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01634 821135.

b) **Medway LINK Hygiene Project questionnaire**

If you have visited or been a patient at Medway Maritime Hospital, there is still an opportunity for you to tell us your views on the cleanliness at the hospital.

Please complete and return the LINK questionnaire (previously supplied) by Monday, 22 March 2010. If you have visited more than one hospital in the last 12 months, please complete a separate questionnaire for each hospital. Additional copies of the questionnaire may be obtained from the KMN office on 01634 821135.

Alternatively, you can complete an online survey using the following link:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/KY2GNBH

For more information, contact Neville Dack, Project Worker, Medway LINK, Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, CT19 4RH, email neville@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427281 / 01634 821135.

c) **Issues, issues, issues**

The Moderating Panel of the LINK is currently considering the following issues which have been raised by LINK participants:

- medication in care homes - research showed considerable scope for improvement in how medicines are prescribed, dispensed, administered and monitored



- lack of trained staff to deliver sexual health advice and information to people with learning disabilities
- information provided to blind and partially sighted people not in accessible formats
- lack of privacy for mental health advocates.

If you have anything to contribute by way of evidence / personal experience in connection with any of these issues, contact Neville by email neville@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427245 or 01634 821135.

2. High uptake for Summary Care Records

More than 99 per cent of people in Medway that have been offered the chance of a Summary Care Record – a secure way to share crucial information within the NHS – have gone ahead.

Next week, further letters are being sent out by NHS Medway to patients at the remaining GP surgeries which are able to support Summary Care Records.

This completes the project started last year, when people in Medway became the first in Kent to benefit from Summary Care Records which give healthcare professionals a secure online way of accessing information about patients' allergies, patients' medication and previous reactions to medication.

For more information contact Victoria Turner, NHS Medway, 50 Pembroke Court, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4EL, email Victoria.turner@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335020.

3. Teenage pregnancy rates falls in Medway

The teenage pregnancy rate in Medway fell by 8.7 per cent between 2007 and 2008, compared to a drop in the national rate of 3.2 per cent.

Since 1998 – the year that progress is measured against nationwide – the teenage pregnancy rate has fallen in Medway by 4.4 per cent.

Dr Alison Barnett, Director of Public Health for Medway and Chair of the Medway Teenage Pregnancy Board, said: "It is really pleasing to see that the efforts of local partners to reduce teenage pregnancy are having such an effect. The reason it is so important, and is a major priority for the Medway Children's Trust, is that the evidence shows that outcomes are likely to be worse for both young parents and their babies. They are more likely to suffer ill health and the effects of low income than other families."

Medway Council's Director of Children's and Adults' Services, Rose Collinson, said: "These results show that we have turned a curve in Medway and are a credit to everyone involved in working with young people. However, we know there's still work to be done and reducing



teenage pregnancy will remain a significant focus of both ourselves and our partners at NHS Medway."

Jinny Robinson, Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Co-ordinator for Medway, said: "In Medway we have:

- dramatically improved sex and relationships education in schools
- introduced very successful Speakeasy courses to help parents speak about sex and relationships to their children
- introduced Student Health Services in some secondary schools and colleges in Medway offering contraceptive and sexual health services.

"We believe these and other measures are reflected in the statistics for 2008 and will have further impact on the statistics for 2009, which will be released next year."

For more information contact Jinny Robinson, Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Coordinator, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR, email Jinny.robinson@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 334307.

4. Medway Stroke Services picked out for national praise

Services to help people from Medway and Swale recover from stroke were highlighted this week as a national example of good practice.

'Progress in Improving Stroke Care: A Good Practice Guide' by the National Audit Office features the Stroke Services Team, run by Medway Community Healthcare, because of its radical approach which improves care for patients.

Everyone involved in the therapy provided to stroke patients from Medway and Swale work in one team under one manager, whether they are based at Medway Maritime Hospital, community hospitals such as St Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester or the Sheppey Community Hospital, or in the community team which visits people in their own homes.

This means staff can work wherever they are most needed and are more aware of individual patients' progress at different stages, from their first symptoms right through to their last rehabilitation session, and so are better able to support them.

The service also focuses on working very closely with patients and carers to ensure that it continues to improve.

Approximately 1,380 people are looked after by the Stroke Services Team every year – 1,000 from Medway and 380 from Swale.

Early diagnosis is very important for giving stroke patients the best chance of recovery. Remember **FAST** – Face, Arms, Speech, Time to call 999.



More information is available at <http://www.nhs.uk/Actfast>

Further details are available from Emma Burns, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email Emma.burns@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335219 / 07943 876688.

5. New interactive 'Stop Smoking' website for young people

National No Smoking Day on Wednesday, 10 March 2010 saw the launch of an interactive website in Medway which will act as a one stop shop for young people who want to learn the facts about smoking or who are looking to quit.

The website, which has been designed in consultation with young people across Medway, has video clips and details of NHS services offering support to quitters.

It aims to encourage young people to stop smoking and includes images which show the effect of the tobacco industry on the environment and developing countries, as well as interactive resources.

For more information contact Helen Lawson, Stop Smoking Project Officer, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NJ, telephone 01634 810981, email Helen.lawson@medwaypct.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.smokefreemedway.co.uk/

6. Easier access to mental health support for young people

A single point of access has been set up in Medway for professionals who wish to refer young people to mental health services or for emotional wellbeing support.

The aim is to ensure that all referrals are viewed and prioritised in the same way using the same criteria, so that patients up to the age of 18 can be directed to the correct service for their level of need.

In Medway, the main services to support children and young people's mental health are the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), provided by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, and the Child and Adolescent Support Team, provided by Medway Community Healthcare and Medway Council.

Referrals can be made by GPs, teachers, social care workers and other professionals.

For more information contact Ian Derbyshire, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NJ, email Ian.derbyshire@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335020.



7. Live It Well

Live It Well, a new five year strategy for mental health and wellbeing in Kent and Medway, has been developed by health and social care professionals with input from people who use services and carers.

It sets out the local vision for promoting people's mental health and wellbeing and ensuring the right care is there when people need it, along with ten commitments on how this will be achieved.

A draft version of Live It Well will be available for comment from 2 April until 7 May 2010 on the NHS Medway website, and a final version will be published in the summer.

For more information contact Phil McSweeney, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NJ, email Phil.mcsweeney@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335020.

8. Improving care for people with dementia

Medway is one of the first places in the country to ensure that people with dementia who go into hospital for other reasons – such as a fall or diabetes – get tailor-made care that takes account of their condition.

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, with funding from NHS Medway, have set up an Acute Hospital Dementia Liaison Team to work at Medway Maritime Hospital. Recruitment to the multi-disciplinary team, based at Elizabeth House, Rainham, is almost complete.

The team will support staff at Medway Maritime Hospital to care for patients with dementia or suspected dementia, by providing specialist assessments and advice on people's future care needs.

They will also provide specialist training and education for all staff on dementia awareness and will promote good practice to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

For more information contact Wendy Alleway, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NJ, email wendy.alleway@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335219.

9. NHS Medway's major medicines waste campaign

Thrown away medicines cost NHS Medway £2 million a year. This money could be spent on:

- 310 hip replacements



- 180 heart by-pass operations
- 2,450 cataract operations
- 360 knee replacements

In the last year (November 2008 – November 2009) NHS Medway spent £25,000 on collecting medicines from community pharmacies that have been returned unused - this equates to 46,000 litres of wasted medication. It's why this month NHS Medway's medicines management team is running a major campaign between Monday, 15 March and Monday, 31 May 2010.

The campaign aims to raise awareness among people in Medway about the importance of only ordering the medication they need when they need it and help NHS Medway to save money and improve healthcare. The team will kick start the campaign, which will be running across GP practices and pharmacies in Medway, with road shows at:

- Boots, Pentagon Centre – Tuesday, 16 March from 10.00am to 2.00pm
- Boots, Hempstead Valley – Tuesday, 23 March 2010 from 10.00am to 2.00pm.

The open days will offer tips and information on how to reduce over-ordering and stockpiling of medicines. The team will also be using the road shows to encourage people to visit their GP or pharmacist regularly for a review of their medication and to discuss with them any issues they may have with their drugs.

The campaign will also highlight the dangers of leaving medication lying around the home.

Nationally, 700 million prescription items are issued every year in England which costs £8 billion but the cost of unused medication is £1 billion.

Even if the medication is never opened - once it has left the pharmacy - it cannot be recycled or used by anyone else.

Further details are available from Emma Burns, NHS Medway, 7-8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email Emma.burns@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335219 / 07943 876688.

10. NHS Medway appoints new Non-executive Directors

The Appointments Commission has appointed Stephen Gee and David Mayes to join the board of NHS Medway as Non-executive Directors.

Stephen Gee, lives in Frindsbury. He is a life-long Medway resident. He has spent 25 years as a Managing Director in international project finance and now runs a successful dog care business in Medway with his wife.

David Mayes, has been a resident of Medway for 12 out of the past 25 years, living in



Gillingham, Rainham and Chatham. He currently lives in Sandwich and represents the area as a Dover District Councillor. He serves on Dover District Council's Scrutiny Committee, is head of its Governance Committee and is a member of the Investment Advisory Group, which oversees the council's investment funds. He is also a Director of Sandwich Bay Residents Limited, which is the company that owns the private estate of Sandwich Bay. David also currently serves on the Board of a major pension fund.

Both David Mayes and Stephen Gee have been appointed for the period from 1 March 2010 to 28 February 2014. The posts carry with them a remuneration of £7,882 per annum.

The appointments have been made in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice.

In accordance with the requirements of the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice any Ministerial appointments held must be declared. Neither David Mayes nor Stephen Gee have held any ministerial appointments.

Further details are available from Emma Burns, NHS Medway, 7-8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email Emma.burns@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335219 / 07943 876688.

12. Kent Association for the Blind's (KAB) 'Eye Care We Care' campaign urges people to have regular eye tests

Everyday in Britain 100 people start to lose their sight, in many cases, a simple, regular eye check-up is all that's needed to avoid long-term damage to your sight. KAB's 'Eye Care We Care' campaign contributes to two of the three aims of the UK Vision Strategy:

- to improve the eye health of the people of the UK
- to eliminate avoidable sight loss and deliver excellent support to those with a sight problem.

Regardless of age, regular eye tests carried out by an optometrist are vital to make sure your eyes are healthy and to help detect early signs of any harmful conditions such as glaucoma.

For more information contact Charles Marshall, 72 College Road, Maidstone, ME15 6SJ, telephone 01622 691357, email charles.marshall@kab.org.uk or visit the website: www.kab.org.uk

11. 'Adding insult to injury' – NHS failure to implement patient safety alerts

Action against Medical Accidents (avma) have published their report on Patient Safety Alerts within the NHS.



Their report highlights the key findings from their research into the system of issuing 'patient safety alerts' to NHS trusts in England, the degree to which they are being implemented or not, and how compliance with the alerts is monitored and regulated. Avma investigated whether the 'patient safety alerts' which are sent out to relevant NHS bodies by the National Patient Safety Agency are being fully implemented and, if not, who was responsible and what is being done about it.

For a copy of the report or more information contact Action against Medical Accidents, 44 High Street, Croydon, CR0 1YB, telephone 020 8688 9555 (administration) or 0845 123 23 52 (helpline) or visit the website: www.avma.org.uk

Events

Please note that in accordance with the LINK's Governance, expenses are not reimbursable for attendance at the events shown over.

1. Have your say on patient transport services

Local people from across Kent and Medway are invited to attend a series of mini debates on Patient Transport Services.

The debates are taking place as part of the Kent and Medway LINK's Access (transport) to Health Services Project.

People will have the opportunity to have their say about patient transport services across Kent and Medway and talk about what works, what needs improving and how services could be improved.

Dates and venues for the debates are as follows:

- The Millennium Centre, Rainham – Wednesday, 24 March, 10.00am – 12.00noon
- St George Hotel, Chatham – Thursday, 25 March, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Please note that places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

For more information and to book a place, contact Louise Murrell, LINK Development Worker, telephone 07976 596797, email louise@kentlink.org or write to us at Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4RH.

If you normally use patient transport services to access healthcare and would not be able to attend without transport, please let us know and we will try to arrange transport for you.



3. Have your say!

How good is your experience of the NHS? Do you get the care you need when you need it? If not, what needs to change?

A further meeting is being held by NHS Medway to invite people to share their experience of the NHS and shape plans for improving health and healthcare locally.

The event at The Sunlight Centre, 105 Richmond Road, Gillingham, ME7 1LX on Monday, 29 March 2010 between 6.30pm and 8.30pm follows on from a series of public meetings held in other parts of Medway earlier this year.

Marion Dinwoodie, Chief Executive of NHS Medway, and other senior managers, will discuss local healthcare and spending plans and listen to what local people feel is the most important health priority in their area.

For more information contact Fiona Gaylor, Commissioning Engagement Coordinator, NHS Medway, 7-8 Amberley Green, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email Fiona.gaylor@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335173.

4. A chance for Medway's carers to have their say

Medway's carers who devote their time to look after sick, disabled or vulnerable people are being given the chance to have their say on the services and support they receive.

Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be holding a public meeting on Tuesday, 23 March 2010, to give carers the chance to share their experiences and learn more about the support and benefits available to them.

The meeting, which will take place at 5.00pm at Gun Wharf, Chatham, is expected to focus on the Medway Carers Strategy published last year, which drew up an action plan for services and support to carers for the next five years.

The strategy also highlighted the need to raise awareness of the number of carers who are entitled to financial benefits in Medway, something tackled earlier this year with a Benefits Take Up campaign that has seen nearly £150,000 worth of benefits find its rightful home so far.

Representatives from Medway Council's social care team, NHS Medway, Medway Carers Centre and the Princess Trust will also be present at the meeting to discuss the experiences of a carer.

Those who cannot attend the meeting but would like to give their views can do so by email rosie.gunstone@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 332715.



For more information contact Rosie Gunstone, Civic Centre, High Street, Strood, ME2 4AU
email rosie.gunstone@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 332715.

5. Health of migrants in the South East region

On the 19 March 2010 the Department of Health is hosting an event in London to report on their findings to key stakeholders of their recent health needs assessment. The event will also launch a new regional network for migrant health which will take forward work on the issues identified in the report.

Participants in this event will have the opportunity to contribute to setting the agenda for this network.

For more information contact David Sheehan, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4GA, telephone 01483 882 498, email David.Sheehan@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website:

www.hpa-events.org.uk/MigrantHealth

Consultations

1. Consultation on abolishing GP boundaries

The Secretary of State for Health has launched a public consultation into abolishing GP practice boundaries. A questionnaire about your choice of GP practice: A consultation on how to enable people to register with the GP practice of their choice is available online at: www.gpchoice.dh.gov.uk/respond-online

The consultation, which will last for 12 weeks, started on 4 March 2010, and will be extended if an election is called.

A summary of the responses, along with the Government's proposed way forward, will be placed on the consultation website.

To respond online visit:

www.gpchoice.dh.gov.uk/respond-online/

To download the full consultation document visit:

www.gpchoice.dh.gov.uk/respond-online/

For more information contact the Department of Health, Choice of GP Practice, Room 2E42, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE or email improvingchoice@dh.gsi.gov.uk



2. NHS Spinal Pathway

Have you ever suffered back pain? Have you received treatment for this pain?

A Kent wide review is currently taking place for back pain services and NHS West Kent would like to hear about your experiences.

An event has been designed for patients on 25 March 2010 at Larkfield Health Centre, Martin Square, Larkfield, ME20 6QJ from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Your input will influence how the service will be provided in the future and what information patients will receive about back pain services.

Free parking is available and travel expenses will be paid by NHS West Kent to those who attend this event.

For more information Emma Cain, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375287, email emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website:

www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

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

Tel: 01634 821135

SMS Text: 07976 596913

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm

(Answerphone available out of office hours)