



News

1. What's going on in the LINK?

i) LINK's Quarterly Event held on 3 June

Following their Annual Meeting on 3 June 2009, LINK participants got down to the business of the LINK in discussing some of the burning questions that affect the lives of Medway residents. These included:

- How NHS Medway are tackling some of the 'giants' of ill health in Medway. Sally-Ann Ironmonger of NHS Medway told of concerns at the prevalence of strokes and deaths from coronary heart disease. In the South East, Medway has the dubious honour of heading the smoking league table and is sixth in the table for obesity.
- Richard Woolterton gave an update on the ambitious programme NHS Medway is currently undertaking, particularly around the network of walk-in centres where a patient can just turn up and receive treatment without being registered – they also have the option of registering with those practices.
- Mary Butcher, a carer managing a social care budget, did a double act with Genette Laws of Medway Council on the new personalisation agenda in Medway. Mary, in future to be called 'Two Books Butcher' gave an inspirational address on how she manages, with two books, her daughter's social care arrangements and, as she says, if she can do it, anyone can!

There were many stalls with useful information about health and social care services and opportunities for LINK participants to network, one with another.

Don't miss the next LINK quarterly event. It will be held on Wednesday, 2 September 2009 in Rainham – the venue will be notified in the next Bulletin.

ii) Selection events held

There have been two selection events for the purpose of assigning roles to LINK participants who want to get a bit more involved. These include making appointments to the Panel of Visitors, ie those LINK participants that can exercise the LINK's 'enter and view' powers; 'Mystery Shoppers' and members to the LINK's Moderating Panel, which is the group of LINK participants that can decide on which issues are taken forward, between LINK events. References are being taken up and, for LINK visitors, CRB checks are being undertaken. We will announce these appointments when this process of checking has been completed.

iii) Bulletin frequency

As a result of a survey of LINK participants, we have decided to reduce the frequency with which these Bulletins are produced. In future this will be every four weeks. However, the content of the Bulletin is placed on the LINK's website more frequently at: www.themedwaylink.co.uk

If you wish to receive future Bulletins electronically rather than hard copy, please contact us by email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or by telephone on 01634 821135.



2. Medway LINK Annual Meeting

Medway LINK held its first Annual Meeting in Rochester on 3 June 2009. Over 80 people attended to hear what the LINK has been doing since it started back in January of this year and what it planned to do in the coming year.

Much of the LINK's efforts to date had been about establishing a network of networks, recruiting participants to the LINK and establishing the foundations (its governance arrangements) for the LINK to safely undertake its role of involving the community of Medway in decisions made about local health and social care services.

Projects that the LINK is looking at in the coming year include:

- Fair Access to Care Services. The LINK intends reviewing the advisory services set up by Medway Council to aid independent living, particularly for those users who do not meet the eligibility criteria to receive care services. It will do so using 'Mystery Shoppers'.
- Access (transport) to health and social care services - getting to and from health / social care units, including use of public transport or travelling by car and associated car parking availability and charging.
- Review of the area's health and social care commissioning plans – the Medway Council's and NHS' plans for future services.
- Following up the LINK's work on the Annual Health Check and planning for next year's programme.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of this work, please do contact us at the LINK and we will ensure that you are involved or kept informed as you wish.

For a copy of the LINK's Annual Report, including a report of the LINK's expenditure to 31 March 2009 - please contact us by telephone on 01634 821135, email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or visit our website at www.themedwaylink.co.uk

A summary of the report is in production - a copy of which will be sent to all Medway LINK participants.

3. Phlebotomy Services – Isle of Grain

NHS Medway has responded to the LINK's representations on behalf of patients on the Isle of Grain over the need to improve access for those patients that require blood to be taken for testing. At present this can involve a difficult journey into the village of Hoo. The issue was raised with the LINK by Grain Disabled and Carers Group.

In their response, the NHS has acknowledged that there has been a shortage of phlebotomy services in Medway. They point to an additional investment they have made of £62,000 to improve services in Rainham, Lordswood, Parkwood and Twydall. As far as the Isle of Grain is concerned they point to the St Werburgh GP practice recently recruiting a nurse with appropriate experience who has started to offer phlebotomy in Grain on Monday mornings



and Stoke on Monday afternoons. At present, the other practice with a satellite branch, The Elms Medical Centre, is not offering a phlebotomy service but has agreed to review this decision.

The issue of fasting diabetics not being prioritised within phlebotomy clinics has been taken up with Medway Community Healthcare and the LINK will be advised of progress in resolving the issue as soon as is available.

The LINK is corresponding with local people over this issue so watch this space!

4. Gillingham gets multi-million pound Health Centre

Contracts have been signed on a new NHS Healthy Living Centre in Balmoral Gardens, Gillingham and construction has just started.

The Healthy Living Centre – costing just under £5million – will house three GP practices, a pharmacy and services run by Medway Community Healthcare including health visiting, speech and language therapy and integrated health and social care teams. There will also be meeting rooms and a community café in the building which is due to open in late summer 2010.

Contracts were signed between NHS Medway, which is funding the project, and Medway LIFT Co, which will build and maintain the centre. In addition, as part of the scheme, the park in Balmoral Gardens will also be renovated.

The GP practices which will be based in the new building are from the St Werburgh Medical Practice branch, currently at Kingsley House, Dr Rahman from Balmoral Road and the St Barnabas House practice currently at Duncan Road. Their surgeries will be unaffected until the new building is ready next year.

5. Residents invited to take part in dental questionnaire

People in Medway will be asked questions about dental health and experiences in a postal questionnaire. NHS Medway's Dental Public Health Department and the University of Kent have teamed up to put together a local questionnaire which they hope will provide them with information about the dental health needs of existing Medway patients and the services that need to be provided in the future. Approximately 8,500 questionnaires will be sent by post to Medway residents aged 16 and over from Monday, 8 June 2009.

Later this year the Department of Health will send out its National Adult Dental Survey – held every 10 years since 1968 – which will give the national and regional dental health picture and the results of which will be published by the end of next year (2010). For more information about the questionnaire contact the Medway Adult Dental Health Survey Team, Department of Dental Public Health, New Court, 1 New Road, Rochester, ME1 1BD, email chssenquiries@kent.ac.uk or telephone 01634 835046.



6. £1.8 million boost for patients' privacy and dignity in Medway

NHS Medway is investing £1.8 million in a programme of improvements to enhance dignity and privacy for patients. The aim is to dramatically reduce the small percentage of people still nursed in mixed sex accommodation by creating single-sex wards and washrooms, among other improvements.

Most of the money, which is from a special Department of Health fund announced by former Secretary of State for Health Alan Johnson earlier this year, will be spent at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Facilities for Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust patients in A Block at Medway Maritime and for people using Medway Community Healthcare's St Bartholomew's Hospital in Rochester and the Wisdom Hospice in Rochester are also being upgraded.

Work at Medway Maritime will begin in the next few months to convert many of its current mixed-sex wards into single sex. Sluices will be duplicated, as will toilets and showers to ensure patients do not have to pass patients of the opposite sex on their way to personal facilities. New blinds and partitions are also being installed to protect the modesty of patients and doors are being secured to prevent patients from being able to enter a nearby ward of the opposite sex. Four new showers will be installed for patients on mental health wards in A Block at Medway Maritime Hospital where there will be further work towards establishing a women's only ward. In St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Wisdom Hospital where there is no mixed sex accommodation, funds are being spent on upgrading curtains round beds and signage.

Staff training and patient surveys, focusing on patients' experience of the care they receive, will be a priority for each of the sites involved.

For further information contact Emma Burns, Media Manager, NHS Medway by email at emma.burns@nhs.net or telephone on 01634 382705.

7. Sponsorship for Homelessness World Cup Player

A Medway Cyrenian client is in the 'almost final' playoffs for the Homelessness World Cup England Squad. He is down to the last 20 competitors from 600+ and the organisers are looking to take 8 players and 2 reserves to the final in September. Medway Cyrenians have been helping out with travel / accommodation costs as best they can but the client would like to raise some funds for himself too, so is undertaking a sponsored hair-day to raise some cash.

If you would like to sponsor him for any amount, the Medway Cyrenians would be pleased to accept your pledge on his behalf by e-mail headoffice@medwaycyrenians.org.uk or telephone 01634 718556. If he does not get through, he has agreed to split the money raised between supporting the Cyrenians own football team and the Homelessness World Cup which is a charity itself.



8. Mini MEND Programme

Pint-size pupils and their families have been learning about different food and exercise in part of a pilot healthy lifestyle programme for toddlers. Eight families have taken part in the scheme since 21 April at Bligh Children's Centre, Strood.

Mini-MEND, which stands for 'Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It!' is designed for two to four year olds and their families and runs for 10 weeks.

The workshops include hot topics such as reading food labels, suitable size portions and healthy eating. The free programme is funded by NHS Medway and Medway Council and it is hoped if the pilot is a success more Mini-MEND programmes will be launched across Medway in the autumn.

For more information contact the Medway MEND Team by telephone on 01634 333103 or visit the website at www.mendprogramme.org/mendservices/minimend

9. Become a member of Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Foundation Trust

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust is in the final stages of applying for Foundation Trust status and this is an opportunity for all Medway LINK participants to get involved.

By becoming a Foundation Trust, the Trust will have greater freedom to develop its services in line with the specific needs of local communities. This is where the local community can help, as patients, service users and local people can all play a direct and meaningful role to influence the future of their local NHS services.

Foundation Trusts represent the move away from centralised control of health care provision and places this firmly in the hands of local communities. The key to this is the Council of Governors and the members of the Foundation Trust that the Governors represent.

To become a member or for more information, visit the Trust's website at www.kmpt.nhs.uk or contact Martine Nichols, Member and Governor Manager at Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, 35 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, ME19 4AX, by email at FTOffice@kmpt.nhs.uk or telephone 01732 520488 or freephone 0800 376 9229.

10. The Safe Network

A government funded service to support charities to safeguard children was launched last week. The Safe Network Unit will be run by the NSPCC and Children England, an umbrella body for children's charities. It is designed to help charities prevent abuse, train staff to identify possible abuse and introduce safer recruitment practices.

To find out more information, visit the website at www.safenetwork.org.uk



11. Training grants in palliative care for children

Children's palliative care charity ACT has reopened its training grants programme to help practitioners and family carers develop their skills in looking after children with life-limiting illnesses.

For more information apply by email to Debbie@act.org.uk or telephone 0117 916 6422.

12. Mobility aids warning from consumer watchdog

Consumers are being urged to watch out when buying mobility scooters, bath aids and orthopaedic furniture.

A consumer watchdog has reported a sharp increase in the number of complaints it has received, from defective products to dodgy sales staff.

Mobility aids warning: Consumer Direct, the Office of Fair Trading managed advice service, received eight per cent more complaints about mobility aid purchases in the first four months of 2009 compared to the year before. Many complaints related to defective products and customer service issues, whilst almost a quarter were about sales and business practices, including complaints that traders were making misleading claims. Callers complained about salespeople engaging in high pressure sales tactics, spending several hours in their homes, and in some cases falsely claiming to be working for Social Services, the Department of Work and Pensions or the NHS.

Your consumer rights: new laws that came into force in October 2008 in most cases give consumers seven days to cancel contracts they agreed to in their homes. Other regulations make it illegal for traders to: "Treat consumers unfairly, mislead them through acts or omissions, subject them to aggressive practices such as high pressure selling techniques. Traders also have to leave the premises when asked."

To find out more about your consumer rights visit the website www.direct.gov.uk or, if you wish to speak to someone, you can telephone Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

13. New 'fit note' to replace doctor's sick note

A new 'fit note' is being introduced to replace the doctor's sick note. The fit note will outline what work an employee can do and is intended to help more people stay in work rather than drift into long term sickness. In May 2008 2.6 million people claimed incapacity benefits.

Lord Bill McKenzie, Works & Pensions Minister said: "Employers tell us that managing sickness absence can be a challenge. This is compounded by a 'sick note' system that makes sickness absence a black and white issue – either you are unfit for work or you are not". He went on to say "We recognise how important it is to help people who are sick to stay in work or get back to work quickly – the new 'fit note' will help do just that."

The new 'fit note' has been developed with the support of health care professionals,



employer representatives and trade unions and will roll-out across Britain in Spring 2010.

14. How to complain – for people detained under the Mental Health Act

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) can help with complaints about health services received if you have:

- been detained
- are subject to guardianship
- are on Supervised Community Treatment

You will need to contact the independent health care provider or the NHS trust in the first instance. For more information on these complaints processes visit the links below. If, however, you are not satisfied with their response, you can contact the CQC at the address also given below.

What will CQC do? They will acknowledge your complaint within five days and respond to your complaint within 25 days.

What are their powers? Whilst their powers to investigate are limited to the use of powers and duties in the Mental Health Act, they can make sure that health services are correctly applying and interpreting the Mental Health Act – the key law which ensures that the rights of people subject to detention, guardianship or supervised community treatment are respected and retained.

So whilst they cannot formally investigate all aspects of your care and treatment, they can make sure that they provide advice and assistance if you are making a complaint against a health service and that the service is fully meeting the requirements of the Mental Health Act.

For further information contact the Care Quality Commission, Maid Marian House, 56 Hounds Gate, Nottingham, NG1 6BG, telephone 0115 943 7100 or visit the website at www.cqc.org.uk/contactus/howtoraiseaconcernorcomplaint

15. Shocking report galvanises Scotland to act on dementia

The Scottish government is to produce the nation's first dementia strategy after a "deeply shocking" report on the plight of people with the condition living in care homes (writes Gordon Carson). Scotland's Care Commission and Mental Welfare Commission found widespread evidence of the so-called 'chemical cosh' to control residents' behaviour. The regulators said anti psychotic drugs should be used as a last resort, not a first, and called for doctors and pharmacists to review prescriptions for people with dementia.

The regulators told 24 out of 30 homes they visited to improve their medication ordering. They found that none of the 30 had a system that could provide a complete, up to date, record of all medicines ordered, whether they were taken and what was disposed of. The report also showed that about 50% of care home residents never went out and about 25% rarely went out.



It also pointed to a lack of training among care home staff with only 10 managers having completed a recognised dementia training course. Scottish Care, which represents Scotland's residential care providers, said there would be significant resource issues for homes to provide individualised activity programmes and manage challenging behaviour.

Up to 67,000 people in Scotland have dementia and about 40% of them are in care homes or hospital.

England's first dementia strategy was published in February.

Events

1. Medway's Mental Health Services

NHS Medway is focusing on mental health and in particular how they can improve services. It is likely they will work towards a formal consultation in the autumn but in the meantime are establishing a Mental Health Communications and Engagement Group to which they would like to invite a LINK participant to join. If you are interested in becoming a LINK representative on this group please contact us by telephone on 01634 821135, email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or text 07976 596913.

2. Charity show – Indian dinner and dance at Medway

Naataya Kendra Dance Academy, Medway, a voluntary non profit organisation who teach children and adults to dance and music to encourage them to be part of the community, are holding another Dinner Dance Show. The show will take place on 28 June 2009 at New Brompton College, Gillingham from 5.00pm-8.00pm followed by dinner.

Proceeds will support the Macmillan Cancer Care Unit at Medway Maritime Hospital and also Pallium India - a palliative care charity based in India. The last show raised £10.5k to support Macmillan Cancer Care Unit in Medway.

For further information about the event, contact Dr Athmaja on 07795 575065 or visit the website www.naatyakendra.com

3. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) consultation events on new registration standards

CQC are running a series of regional consultation events for people who use services, care providers and stakeholders during June and July 2009. These events form part of the consultation on their guidance for compliance with the new registration requirements.

CQC's aim is to accommodate as wide a range of stakeholders as possible at each of the events, but please note places are limited.



For further information please telephone 0208 8481 3313, Typetalk 18001 0208 481 3313 or email cqcevents@livegroup.co.uk or visit the following websites:
www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/consultations
www.greengagelive.com/event.cqcregionalconsultations

Consultations

1. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) wants you to help shape the regulation of health and adult social care services

The regulation of health and adult social care is changing. Take part in the CQC's public consultation to help them develop guidance on what care services must do to meet new legally enforceable registration standards.

From April 2010 all regulated health and adult social care providers will be required by law to register with CQC. This is the first time all public and independent health and adult social care services in England will need to meet essential common standards of quality and safety.

CQC would like your feedback on whether their guidance appropriately reflects the new registration standards, and what should rightly be expected of a safe, quality care service. Anyone interested in this regulation of health and adult social care can take part in this consultation.

To find out more please telephone 0208 8481 3313, Typetalk 18001 0208 481 3313 or visit the website at www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/consultations

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)