

News

1. What's going on in the LINK?

a) *LINK participants brave the elements*

The LINK's intrepid Visitors have been hard at work over this harsh winter period visiting Kent and Medway's hospitals as part of the LINK's hygiene and cleanliness project. The project is aiming to back up the work of hospitals in focusing on good hand hygiene and cleaning. To achieve this, our Visitors have been:

- observing how well staff and the public adhere to good hand hygiene practice in order to keep patients safe
- taking random samples on doors and furniture to identify organisms that the gel is there to protect against
- taking samples of the strength of chlorine used by cleaners to combat infective organisms.

The programme of unannounced visits was due to end on the 8 January 2010 but has been extended, due to the adverse weather conditions, to the end the month.

b) *Transport – car parking charges at hospitals*

The LINK is undertaking a significant review of some of the obstacles patients experience in finding their way to hospital in terms of transport. So it was interesting that the Government, just after Christmas, published a consultation on the issue of hospital car parking charges. The consultation document entitled 'NHS Car Parking: Consultation on improving access for patients' can be found online at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_110557

Whilst it is possible for LINK participants to submit their individual comments to the Department of Health, we are attempting to get a collective LINK response together. If you are a LINK participant and are interested in letting us have your views, please fill in our on-line questionnaire at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/T29CCRZ

For LINK participants without internet access, we are sending a copy of the questionnaire which should be returned by Tuesday, 16 February 2010 to our FREEPOST address as follows:

Medway LINK, Kent & Medway Networks, FREEPOST NAT 17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR.

The consultation ends on 23 February 2010.

c) *Keep up to date with LINK activities*

One of the daunting (but exciting) things those of us supporting the LINK are facing is the bewildering range of issues being presented to the LINK, often with not an inconsiderable amount of passion – bearing in mind some of these issues have been around for some time.

MEDWAY LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

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The LINK's Moderating Panel has been ably grappling with these and giving advice on how they should be dealt with by the LINK. If you have submitted an issue affecting health or social care services in Medway and want to know what the LINK is doing about it, why not check the updated LINK work programme online at:

www.themedwaylink.org.uk/assets/files/Publications/Consolidated_Work_Programme_09-10.pdf

The work programme will contain all the actions taken on the LINK's behalf and will reference documents that you may wish to see, such as a reply from the NHS or the Medway Council's Social Services.

d) *Mystery shopping*

On 22 January 2010 LINK Mystery Shoppers will receive training in the 'art' of mystery shopping. They will then be able to undertake the task of reviewing the following services commissioned by Medway Council:

- Living Well in Medway
- advice provided to self-funders by residential care and nursing homes providers in Medway.

e) *Coordinating Team sets its diary*

The Coordinating Team of the LINK - which manages the governance of the LINK - has agreed its programme of meetings for the year, as follows.

- Wednesday, 13 January 2010
- Wednesday, 3 February 2010 - training session - 9.30am start with lunch and 2.30pm finish
- Wednesday, 3 March 2010
- Wednesday, 7 April 2010
- Wednesday, 5 May 2010
- Wednesday, 2 June 2010
- Wednesday, 7 July 2010
- Wednesday, 4 August 2010
- Wednesday, 1 September 2010
- Wednesday, 6 October 2010
- Wednesday, 3 November 2010
- Wednesday, 1 December 2010

With the exception of the February meeting, which is a training event, these are open to the public to attend and are held from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

Meetings are usually held in the Brook Theatre, the Old Chatham Town Hall, Chatham, however, if you wish to attend, please contact the Medway LINK office on 01634 821135 prior to each meeting for confirmation of the venue.



2. Clinicians treating homosexuality as a mental illness

March 2009 saw the publication of the results of a survey of over 1,400 mental health professionals on whether they would attempt to change a client's sexual orientation if requested. Although only 4% said that they would do so, 17% reported having assisted at least one client to reduce their gay or lesbian feelings.

The report concluded that "A significant minority of mental health professionals are attempting to help lesbian, gay and bisexual clients to become heterosexual. Given lack of evidence for the efficacy of such treatments, this is likely to be unwise or even harmful." The full report can be found at:

www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/9/11

The Medway LINK has had this issue drawn to its attention and, whilst there is no evidence of such practices in Kent and Medway, would welcome any relevant views / experiences, good or bad, from LINK participants.

If you have any views / experiences, contact Neville Dack, Project Worker, Medway LINK, Kent & Medway Networks, FREEPOST NAT 17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR, email neville@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427245.

3. NHS Medway appoints new Chair

Denise Harker has been appointed to the post of Chair of NHS Medway Primary Care Trust.

Denise has spent the last 18 months as a non-executive director and Chair of the Audit Committee at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. She is a non-executive director of the Met office, a Governor of Ravensbourne College and is a Trustee of the Rory Peck Trust. Denise's experience also includes working as Managing Director for London News Network Ltd and Financial Controller of Programme Production and Facilities for TVS Television. Born and educated in Kent, Denise started her career at Reed International plc completing her accountancy training in 1977.

Denise's term as Chair will be for the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010. The post carries with it an annual remuneration of £34,152.

For more information contact Caroline Chick, NHS Medway, 7 – 8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email caroline.chick@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335217 / 07943 876688.

4. Health and Lifestyle Team launched

Earlier this year the Sunlight Development Trust was funded by NHS Medway to deliver a national initiative which aims to support people leading healthier lives. On 14 December 2009 the Health and Lifestyle Team was officially launched at the Sunlight Trust, Richmond



Road, Gillingham. The 12 strong team are able to provide holistic one-to-one support and can help with anything from low self esteem to cutting down on alcohol consumption.

Referral cards will shortly be available in all GP surgeries, pharmacies, family and children's centers etc but at present referrals are taken from anyone in Medway who wants to make a health and lifestyle change.

For more information or to access the service, contact Julie Collins, Sunlight Centre, 105 Richmond Road, Gillingham, ME7 1LX, email halt@sunlighttrust.org.uk or telephone 01634 888624

5. NHS 'Keep Warm to Keep Well' campaign

As temperatures are predicted to remain extremely cold, health bosses are urging people to Keep Warm to Keep Well.

Nationally, the number of extra deaths in England and Wales last winter (2008 / 2009) * was the highest since 1999 / 2000. Across South East Kent, Canterbury saw the highest rates with 130 excess winter deaths compared to 20 in Swale.

With the recession biting and people feeling the pinch of heating bills, health bosses are urging people to seek the help that's out there to make sure they keep their homes warm.

Children, the elderly and people with disabilities or long-term health conditions are the most at risk but by keeping warm they will be better equipped to fight off bugs – including seasonal flu and swine flu.

If you are struggling to pay for extra heating costs you maybe eligible for a range of benefits and help to heat your home.

* A breakdown for winter 2008 / 2009 is not yet available by Primary Care Trust (PCT) area. Only national statistics are currently available which show an increase.

For more information contact Julia Rogers, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, Brook House, John Wilson Business Park, Reeves Way, Chesterfield, Whitstable, CT5 3DD, telephone 01227 791163, email julia.rogers@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk

6. Welcome to two new faces in Kent & Medway's Research Network!

The Comprehensive Local Research Network (CLRN) for Kent and Medway based at Preston Hall, Aylesford has recently appointed Margaret Hall and David Waldock to lead Public Engagement & Patient Involvement in the county.



CLRNs came into being in 2008 following the implementation of the UK wide strategy *Best Research for Best Health*. The Kent and Medway Research Network has been busy building the team and Margaret and David are the latest recruits.

Over the coming year Margaret and David will be working to raise the profile of the Research Network throughout the county, and encouraging people to come forward to get involved in research. Margaret will be taking the lead in the West Kent area, and David will be leading in Medway, with East Kent shared between them.

If you would like to get more involved or find out more, contact Margaret Hall or David Waldoock, Preston Hall, Aylesford, ME20 7NJ, email margarethall@nys.net or david.waldoock@nhs.net or telephone 01622 227351.

7. Bowel cancer screening

Screening for bowel cancer is now available across Kent and Medway.

The final phase was put in place on Tuesday, 22 December 2009 and screening centres across the region's acute trusts have gone live.

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK and the second leading cause of cancer deaths with more than 16,000 people dying every year. About one in twenty people in the UK will develop bowel cancer in their lifetime.

Bowel screening aims to detect cancer at an early stage before people develop symptoms so they can undergo more effective treatment.

Screening can also detect polyps which may develop into cancer at a later stage. These can then be removed, reducing the risk of cancer developing. About one in ten people who need further investigation through the test are found to have cancer, so it is important to attend your screening appointment.

The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers screening every two years to all men and women aged 60 to 69 years. Invitations will be sent automatically to people registered with a GP, so it is important to make sure your contact details are up-to-date. Invitations will be sent over the next two years depending on your date of birth. People aged over 70 can request a test kit by calling a freephone helpline on 0800 707 60 60.

Men and women eligible for screening will receive an invitation letter explaining the programme and an information leaflet entitled Bowel Cancer Screening - The Facts. About a week later, a kit will be sent out along with step-by-step instructions for completing the test at home.

For more information, visit the website:
www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel/



8. Social care performance ratings in the South East

The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the official regulator for the NHS and social care services, gave its first major national statement on 3 December 2009 on the quality of adult social care based on three significant studies:

- an assessment of 148 councils' social care services for adults, including performance ratings based on seven outcomes set by the Government, and was based on data up to 31 March 2009
- an analysis of whether councils were commissioning the best possible care, whether this is from the private, voluntary or statutory sector
- an update on the performance of 24,000 care homes, home care agencies, nursing agencies and shared lives schemes, looking at whether quality was improving.

For Kent and Medway the report shows both as doing 'Well' in 2009 for delivering outcomes, as opposed to both achieving 'Good' for 2007 and 2008.

'Well' – is defined as a service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for people, is cost effective and makes contributions to wider outcomes for the community. (It has omitted the definition for 'Good' so cannot give as a comparison on definition).

CQC also state that although the performance of council social care services is broadly positive, they are still particularly concerned by the continuing poor performance of some care homes. The South East region registers some of the weakest performance of any region – and the number of residential care homes and homecare agencies who provide a weak service is simply not acceptable for local people. These providers must act quickly to rectify this as next year the CQC will introduce a new system of registration for all care providers – and they intend to focus their attention on those who are failing.

For further information contact:

Sophie Ure Martin, Care Quality Commission, Regional Communications Manager, telephone 0207 448 9095 or 07795 548529 or contact the media office on (London) 0207 448 9401 (out of hours 07917 232143).

Dave Shields, LINKs Programme Lead, Department of Health South East, Department of Health – South East, Social Care & Local Partnerships Programme, Bridge House, 1st Floor, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4GA, email Dave.shields@dh.gsi.gov.uk or telephone DH (South East) Switchboard 01483 882255.

9. New Care Quality Commission web form for local representative groups launched on 1 December 2009

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has launched a new web based form for local groups to use when submitting evidence on local experiences of health and social care.



The web form is for Local Involvement Networks, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Foundation Trust Boards of Governors, Learning Disability Partnership Boards, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and also local voluntary organisations.

The CQC recommends groups download the printable version of the form to help your organisation, committee or group decide on the information you wish to send because it is not possible to save a draft of the form. The CQC will send you an email to confirm they have received your evidence and a summary of the information you have submitted.

If you have problems or suggestions for improving the web form, please let the CQC know using the relevant section at the end of the form.

For more information contact Lucy Hamer, email lucy.hamer@cqc.org.uk or Clare Delap, email clare.delap@cqc.org.uk Involvement Managers, Involvement Team, Engagement Directorate, Care Quality Commission, National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA, telephone 020 7448 4560 / 020 7448 9223 or visit the website: www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices

10. Pandemic flu update

The Department of Health has issued its latest issue of Pandemic Flu News providing up to date information, guidance and advice for the Winter.

For more information contact Department of Health, Richmond, House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, telephone 020 7210 4850, email pandemicflu@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk

11. Addison's Disease Self Help Group (ADSHG)

Addison's disease is a rare, potentially fatal endocrine condition in which the adrenal glands cease to function. The most recent research puts the rate of diagnosed cases at around 8,400 patients in the UK. This makes it roughly 200 times rarer than diabetes, another endocrine condition which sometimes develops along with Addison's.

Life-long treatment with replacement steroid hormones is required but with the right balance of daily medication, people with Addison's can expect to have a normal life span and to lead full and productive lives. Yet living with Addison's is not all plain sailing.

The daily medication needs to be taken two or three times each day, at the right time of day and extra doses are needed when dealing with illness, infections etc. In the event of serious injury or trauma, (including vomiting more than once) an emergency injection of 100mg hydrocortisone may be needed, followed by urgent medical attention. This is because patients experiencing adrenal crisis can suffer a rapid drop in blood pressure, potentially

leading to cardiac arrest or stroke.

The ADSHG, with the help of the Clinical Advisory Panel (made up of leading endocrine specialists) have done a lot of work in helping raise awareness amongst the medical profession, many of whom have never come across patients with this condition.

If you, or someone you know, is living with Addison's Disease, contact the support group via their website:

www.addisons.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. Service user interviewers wanted - Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

- Can you talk to others and find out their views?
- Have you experience of using mental health services?
- Are you keen to help the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust ensure the views of minority groups are heard?
- Do you want to help Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust improve its arrangements for learning from service users' experience?
- Are you able to develop your skills through training?

After successfully completing two days training, payment of £11.24 plus travel costs per interview can be made (approximately eight interviews will be conducted by each participant). Whilst training, travel costs, lunch and refreshments will be provided. Applicants must complete a two page application form and provide a statement in support of the application from a User Forum representative or mental health worker.

For more information contact the PPCI Office, St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury, CT1 1TD or telephone 01227 812020.

2. Health and healthcare where you live

NHS Medway is holding a series of public events, discussing the financial downturn and its impact on local healthcare services.

Marion Dinwoodie, Chief Executive and Helen Buckingham, Director of Commissioning and Performance will be present and you will have the opportunity to discuss the key health



issues in your area.

They want your views, ideas and involvement so they can get a better picture of the areas you think the Trust should be focusing on.

Join them at the following venues:

- 18 January 2010 – 6.00pm – 8.00pm - Hoo Institute, Hoo Peninsula
- 26 January 2010 – 6.00pm – 8.00pm - Brook Theatre, Chatham

So that they are able to accommodate everyone who wishes to attend, please contact Fiona Gaylor, NHS Medway, 50 Pembroke Court, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, ME4 4EL, email engagement@medwaypct.nhs.uk or tel 01634 335173.

3. Developing User-Led Organisations in Medway – Information Event – Friday, 29 January 2010 – Capstone Farm Country Park

Medway Council will be hosting a second event to support the development of a User-Led Organisation (ULO) in Medway. A ULO is run and managed by the group of people that it serves, which may include, disabled people, carers or older people. There is an expectation that a typical ULO should provide the following:

- information advice
- advocacy and peer support
- support using direct payments and / or individual budgets
- support to recruit and employ personal assistants
- assistance in self-assessment
- disability equality training.

As you will appreciate, a ULO is about being led by service users and therefore Medway Council would appreciate your support in bringing along up to five service users to participate in this event, so they can be part of the process from the beginning.

If you wish to take part in this event, please confirm your attendance with Kaz Macklin, letting her know of any special requirements you or your guests may have by Friday, 22 January 2010 at the latest. The day will commence at 10.00am and will conclude at 1.00pm, with lunch and refreshments provided.

For more information contact Kaz Macklin, Social Care Commissioning and Welfare, Benefits Team, Level 4, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR, email Kaz.macklin@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 331285.

4. Invitation to attend an information governance workshop

The Kent and Medway Clinical Advisory Group, Information Management and Technology



Programme Office and the Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service are arranging a number of information governance workshops to develop a Data Collaboration Protocol. The work will take into consideration non-NHS providers and providers of healthcare services from the private sector.

'Who Owns the Data' workshop for clinicians and patients will be held on Tuesday, 26 January 2010 from 10.00am – 1.00pm in Room 2, Ward Block, Preston Hall.

There are four workshops in this series, the output from one feeding the next workshop. At the end they hope to have agreed a data sharing protocol or set of principles across Kent and Medway which can then be fed into the three tier protocol which is due for renewal with the Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority.

For more information contact Rory King, Information Governance Project Manager, Kent and Medway IM&T Programme Office, The Bothy, Preston Hall, Aylesford, ME20 7NJ, email rory.king@nhs.net or eck-pct.KMDPO@nhs.net or telephone 07970 804197.

5. Regional Action and Involvement in the South East (RAISE) - Health and Social Care Event

RAISE will be hosting an event to look at the issues affecting the third sector engagement with health and social care agenda. The main themes that will be covered include: commissioning and funding, personalisation and tackling health inequalities.

The event will be held on Wednesday, 3 March 2010 from 10.00am to 3.30pm at the Holiday Inn, Egerton Road, Guildford, GU2 7XZ.

For more information contact Richard Andrews, RAISE, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4UA, telephone 01483 885265, email Richard@raise-networks.org.uk or visit the website: www.raise-networks.org.uk

6. South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SECAMB) – Board meeting dates

The next SECAMB Board meetings will be held on 29 January 2010 and 30 March 2010, venue to be agreed.

For more information contact the Kent Office, South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Heath Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, ME17 4BG, telephone 01622 747010, email enquiries@secamb.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.secamb.nhs.uk



7. Regional Summit: Supporting LINKs in the South East

Limited places are available at the above event to be held on Thursday, 11 February 2010 at the Holiday Inn, Guildford, Surrey.

The conference aims to:

- establish an effective regional network for supporting LINKs in the South East and any sub-regional or thematic groups in support of this
- provide a forum for exchange with other Department of Health and Government programmes in the South East concerned with public involvement and citizen empowerment, in relation to health, social care and wellbeing
- provide a regional platform for LINK members and allies in the South East and to strengthen relationships with other 3rd sector regional networks concerned with health, care and wellbeing
- enhance the capacity of LINKs to engage more effectively with NHS Public & Patient Experience leads and other key agencies (eg Care Quality Commission) in the South East
- advise on the 2010 work plan for the Department of Health South East LINKs Programme Lead and identify key priorities for action.

For more information or to book a place, contact Christine Cook, Department of Health, South East, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4GA, email christine.cook@dh.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 01483 882469.

8. The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) is holding a series of six interactive meetings in March 2010

The meetings will be held as follows:

- London - 1 and 17 March 2010
- Belfast - 4 March 2010
- Cardiff - 9 March 2010
- Liverpool - 12 March 2010
- Edinburgh - 15 March 2010.

The programme for each day has been designed to help de-mystify the role of regulation in the Health Sector. Various exercises will enable you to get involved and lend your voice to some ongoing debates in the field of professional regulatory bodies, who are working with CHRE to deliver these meetings.

To see draft programmes of each event visit the website:
www.chre.org.uk/public/199

Places are limited so please register early for your chosen event to avoid disappointment.



For more information or to register for an event, email reception@chre.org.uk or telephone 0207 389 8030. When you email or telephone, please state clearly your full name together with the date and location of the event you wish to attend.

Consultations

1. Kent LINK would like feedback on services for sufferers of chronic pain

"It has been estimated that 7.8 million people in the UK now suffer with moderate to severe pain that has lasted over 6 months. Over one third of households have someone in pain at any given time" according to the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) report 'Pain: Breaking Through the Barrier'.

The CMO reports that in 2006, over a third of chronic pain patients in the United Kingdom reported inadequate control of their pain. The report suggests that "an ideal service would have links between the various elements of care and those who provide them, with clear, straightforward pathways based on highly variable patient need".

In response to concerns raised by LINK participants regarding services for sufferers of chronic pain in Kent, the LINK is investigating experiences of people suffering chronic pain, both in hospital and in the community.

What chronic pain services are available to you in your local area? Are these easily accessible to you, if not why not? How have these services helped you deal with chronic pain? What could have been done to improve your experience?

If you are able to provide personal experiences relating to any of the above questions then please visit the following link:

www.themedwaylink.org.uk/index.php?q=510

For more information contact Sophie Swain, Kent LINK, Kent & Medway Networks, FREEPOST NAT 17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR, email sophie@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427281 / 01303 297050.

2. Have your say on pharmacies in Kent

Across Kent people are being asked for their views on local pharmacy (chemist) services, so that the Primary Care Trusts can look at the reasons why people use their pharmacy, how easy pharmacies are to access and what services could be provided in pharmacies in the future.

People from across Kent are invited to complete a short survey but all the information they



provide will remain anonymous and will not be used in any way other than to look at pharmacy service provision.

The survey can be accessed at:
westkentpct-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/pharmacy

For more information contact Emma Cain, Public Liaison Officer, NHS West Kent, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375287, email Emma.cain@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website:
www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

3. Emergency Mobile Phone Texting (SMS) Service

Have you or someone you know used the Emergency SMS service? If so, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) would like your views about how it went.

The pilot for use of the SMS service for contacting emergency services was launched in September 2009 and already over 3,600 people have registered to use it. It aims to improve access to emergency services for deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired people in the UK. People send a text to 999 where it is passed onto the appropriate emergency service.

It is important to find out if this service works and meets the needs of people with a hearing loss. If it is a success, then the service will be launched during 2010.

To be able to use the service you must register your mobile phone, this can be done online at:
www.emergencysms.org.uk/

Send feedback by email to technology@rnid.org.uk or via the website:
www.emergencysms.org.uk

For more information contact the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, telephone: 0808 808 0123, textphone: 0808 808 9000 or SMS: 07800 000360.

4. NHS car parking: Consultation on improving access for patients

The Department of Health is currently seeking the views of the public on the implementation of free NHS hospital car parking for inpatients.

The consultation document is available for download via the Department of Health website or hard copy upon request.

If you would like to have your say, complete the response form online and return it to the Department of Health before Tuesday, 23 February 2010.



For more information contact Michael Bellas. NHS Car Parking Consultation, Gateway Review and Estates and Facilities Division (GREFD), Department of Health, Room 3N13, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE telephone 0113 254 5757, email cpconsultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_110557

5. The NHS Constitution – a Consultation on new patient rights.

The NHS Constitution was published in January 2009. It brings together the principles, values, rights and responsibilities that underpin the NHS. The Constitution also contains 25 rights and 14 pledges for patients and the public, as well as their responsibilities.

NHS Medway now want to know from patients and the public of Medway what they think about the government proposals for inclusion of two new rights and the introduction of a new role of Constitution Champion. They want to know how you feel about:

- introducing a new right to access services within maximum waiting times or for the NHS to take all reasonable steps to offer a range of alternative providers if this is not possible;
- introducing a new right to a NHS Health Check every five years for those aged 40 – 74, to come into effect in 2012, and the right to see an alternative provider if you are not offered one by the provider you approach;
- explore the introduction of a number of potential future rights; and
- introduce the role of 'Constitution Champion'.

The NHS Constitution belongs to us all, and the changes proposed are important. If you are able to contribute then please do so either through the online survey available on NHS Medway's homepage www.medwaypct.nhs.uk or in writing direct to:

NHS Constitution
South East Coast Strategic Health Authority
Yorks House
18-20 Massetts Road
Horley, RH6 7DE

Please note that the Consultation closes on 25 January 2010 so any views for inclusion will need to be submitted prior to that date.

For further information contact Jacqueline Green, NHS Medway, 7 – 8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, email Jacqueline.green@medwaypct.nhs.uk or telephone 01634 335216.

6. Invitation to Age Equality Consultation Event

The Department of Health (DH) launched a consultation on Age Equality in Health and Social



Care on 23 November 2009 that invited interested parties to take part.

Four events have now been planned to increase opportunities for consultation involvement to enable the NHS local authorities and other stakeholders to contribute to this consultation and comment on the work in producing a resource pack to support local implementation.

The DH would welcome interest from non-executive directors and members of professional and managerial staff, members of third and independent sector providers and representatives of the public and campaigning organisations.

The events will be held as follows:

- Friday, 22 January 2010 - Birmingham
- Wednesday, 3 February 2010 - London
- Monday, 8 February 2010 - Leeds

For bookings email ageequalityevents@dh.gsi.gov.uk

For enquiries email ageequalityevents@dh.gsi.gov.uk or telephone Judith Saville on 0117 900 3557.

For more information, contact Emma Benson, Policy Officer, Policy Support Unit, Policy & Strategy Directorate, Department of Health, Age Equality Team, Room 602, Richmond House 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, telephone 0207 210 5229 or visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_108887

7. Personal Care at Home Bill: a Consultation on proposals for regulations and guidance

The Bill will provide for those with the greatest care needs to be offered free personal care at home.

Existing powers allow local authorities to provide certain community care services free of charge for up to six weeks. The Bill will remove this time limit in respect of personal care at home for those in the greatest need.

The Government estimates that the Bill would help around 400,000 people with care needs and guarantee free personal care for the 280,000 people with the greatest need. The legislation is intended to be the first step towards establishing a new National Care Service.

This Consultation document seeks views on the proposals in the Personal Care At Home Bill to provide free personal care for people living in their own homes as mentioned above. It sets out how the scheme is likely to work and what will be contained in regulations and in guidance.



The Consultation will last from 25 November 2009 until 23 February 2010 but the Department of Health would very much welcome earlier responses if possible to reach them by Tuesday, 26 January 2010.

For more information contact the Personal Care At Home Team, Department of Health, Area 115, Wellington House, 133 - 155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG or email personalcareathome@dh.gsi.gov.uk

To access the following documents:

- consultation document (PDF.352K)
- easyread version (PDF 2866K)
- easyread answers booklet (PDF 670K)
- impact assessment (PDF 4846K)
- equality impact assessment (PDF 104K)

visit the website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_109139

8. Consultation on the proposals to implement generic substitution in primary care

The Medicines, Pharmacy & Industry Division, Department of Health (DH) are holding a 12 week public consultation.

The DH committed to the introduction of generic substitution in primary care in the NHS. The DH now commences its promised consultation on the proposals to implement generic substitution, which will enable pharmacists and other dispensers to fulfil a prescription for a branded medicine by dispensing an equivalent generic medicine.

Further to this, the Department is consulting on three options for the implementation of generic substitution in primary care in England. These options are:

- do nothing
- introduce dispensing flexibility, but with specific exclusions, so that the arrangements do not apply to a selected group of products on an exempt list
- introduce dispensing flexibility, but limiting the scheme in such a way that the arrangements only apply to a selected group of products on a select list.

The consultation will run from 5 January 2010 to 30 March 2010. There will also be consultation events and details of these will be published on the NHS Primary Care Commissioning website at: www.pcc.nhs.uk/events

For more information contact Beth Foster, Policy Manager - Community Pharmacy, Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS, telephone

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a Local Involvement Network

020 797 22922, email generic.substitution@dh.gsi.gov.uk or visit the website:
www.dh.gov.uk/en/consultations/index.htm

Contact Information

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