

News

1. What's going on in the LINK?

a) **Quality Accounts and LINKs**

From April 2010 a new system of assuring the public of the quality of their NHS will commence. It is to be called 'Quality Accounts' which will take the form of annual reports to the public on the quality of health care services. Prior to publication, LINKs will be given an opportunity to supply a statement to indicate whether it believes the reports are a fair reflection of the healthcare services provided. It is expected that the LINK will be given 30 days to prepare its statement.

With NHS Trusts expected to publish Quality Accounts in June it is evident that the LINK will need to start preparing the process whereby LINK participants are enabled to play a full part in this process.

For the first year of this new system it will only apply to the quality of acute healthcare services.

b) **LINK stalwarts battle on!**

In the last Bulletin we reported that the visits to Kent and Medway hospitals, as part of the LINKs cleanliness and hygiene project, were being extended to the end of January because of the bad weather. Regrettably, the visits have been further delayed because of the 'Winter vomiting virus' in some hospitals. We are now working to an end of February conclusion of the visits.

All LINK participants will shortly be receiving a questionnaire in order to capture their views on cleanliness and hygiene in Kent and Medway's hospitals - that is, if they have had recent experience of being a patient or visiting someone in hospital. The questionnaire has been adjusted to include questions that have arisen from the preliminary laboratory findings from some of the initial visits.

c) **LINK participants responding to the Storm!**

Over the next few years public expenditure is widely expected to come under increasing pressure. While estimates of the scale of changes vary, some commentators have suggested that the health sector should expect to receive 'flat cash' – funding that is static, requiring local health systems to absorb the costs of inflation and increases in demand and activity.

On 11 November 2009 the Medway Primary Care Trust (NHS Medway) convened a workshop for the health and social care community to consider how it should respond to the financial 'storm'. Around 70 people including LINK participants took part in the event. NHS Medway have now produced a report culminating from the event which highlights how attendees thought NHS Medway could best deal with this scenario.



To receive a copy of this interesting and informative report contact the KMN office by email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 01634 821135.

d) Do you want to become more involved!

Would you like to become more involved with the Medway LINK? The LINK is currently undertaking a recruitment drive and is looking for participants who would be interested in becoming:

- part of the Coordinating Team
- part of the Moderating Panel
- an Authorised Visitor taking part in projects such as the hygiene one detailed above
- a Mystery Shopper
- a representative of the LINK on external health or social care groups.

Full support and training will be provided and out of pocket expenses reimbursed, in line with the LINKs Expenses Policy.

For further information contact Jane Williamson, email jane@medwaylink.org or telephone 01634 821135 or 07968 056285.

For more information on any of the above news stories, contact Kent & Medway Networks on 01634 821135, email info@kmn-ltd.co.uk or visit the Medway LINK website: www.themedwaylink.co.uk

2. LINK participants feedback improves services!

Did you know that your feedback along with feedback from patients given through patient surveys carried out by healthcare providers on behalf of NHS Medway, through the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and complaints has led to a number of improvements to services in Medway.

These include:

- reduced waiting times for child speech and language therapy
- easier to use patient transport service
- more focus on explaining the ward routine to new patients at Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
- hospital pharmacists involved at an earlier stage so medication can be ready for when patients go home (pilot scheme).

Surveys are now carried out regularly by Medway Community Healthcare, Medway NHS Foundation Trust and Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership as part of an enhanced focus on patient experience agreed with NHS Medway.

If you would like further information on the above surveys or to take part, then please contact



Jane Williamson, Medway LINK, Kent & Medway Networks, FREEPOST NAT 17761, Folkestone, CT19 4BR, telephone 01634 821135, email jane@medwaylink.org or visit the website:

www.themedwaylink.org

3. Physiotherapy services in Swale

It was brought to the LINKs attention by Swale participants that there was some concern regarding a shortage of physiotherapy services within Swale, leading to long waits for treatment.

The LINK understands from NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent that they recognise there are shortcomings in the provision of physiotherapy services and are reviewing needs throughout East Kent in order to develop a commissioning plan for physiotherapy. The review will cover areas of concern raised by participants and include clinical input from GPs and physiotherapists.

The LINK will be maintaining a watching brief regarding this review and will provide any further information in future issues of the Bulletin

For further information contact Sophie Swain by email sophie@kmn-ltd.co.uk or telephone 07814 427281.

4. Free courses for carers – ‘Caring with Confidence’

The Kent Carers Consortium are offering a programme of seven, three hour support sessions aimed at anyone over 18 years old who is looking after a friend or relative, to make a positive difference to their life and the person they care for. All of the sessions are free to attend and run one day a week for seven weeks. Help may be available to those who need assistance with alternative care costs to enable them to attend. The group are keen to reach people who usually miss out on getting help or are just not aware of what is out there, or may indeed feel that they are not a carer.

Courses are planned for Ashford, Dartford, Dover, Medway, Swale and Tonbridge.

Bookings are now being taken for these courses, with more planned for the rest of the county over the next two years.

For more information contact Helen Appleton, Kent Consortium, The Riverside Centre, Dickens Road, Gravesend, DA12 2JY, telephone 01474 369159, email helen.appleton@carerskent.org or visit the website:

www.carerskent.org



5. Support for people with chronic conditions

An issue has been raised with the LINK about support networks for people suffering from Crohn's Disease or Colitis.

There are Expert Patient Programmes available in Kent and Medway, including a six week (day time, once a week) generic programme that helps people to learn to control their condition. There are also programmes around specific issues and for carers. Courses are led by people who have chronic conditions themselves.

The office that covers Kent and Medway can be contacted on 0800 988 5520. The website of the national umbrella organisation is:
www.expertpatients.co.uk

There is also a Kent branch of the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC) and information can be found at:
www.groups.nacc.org.uk

The Association does not publish a local telephone number, but the national helpline can be contacted on 0845 130 2233.

For more information contact the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease, 4 Beaumont House, Sutton Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5HH, telephone 0845 130 2233 or 01727 844296, email info@nacc.org.uk or visit the website:
www.nacc.org.uk

6. A new website has been launched to help us live life well

A new website has been launched to help people live life well in Kent and Medway.

The site focuses on improving mental well-being and has a wide range of practical tips for boosting happiness. The website may be accessed at:
www.liveitwell.org.uk

It includes the mental health equivalent of 'five a day' - five things to do to keep yourself in good shape - and 'Dr. Tim's 23 tips for becoming more happy'.

It also has information about local activities that people can join in, with advice on becoming more active and eating healthily and sets out the vision for mental health in Kent and Medway which has been developed in response to the views of people who use services locally.

The site which is hosted by Sevenoaks MIND was put together with ideas from a wide range of people from across Kent and Medway.



For more information contact Matt Willis, Head of Press and PR, NHS West Kent, Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RE, telephone 01732 375270, email Matt.willis@wkpct.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

7. Dementia advisers

Medway's dementia advisers service will start later this month. A joint venture between Medway Council, NHS Medway, and the Sunlight Development Trust, the service aims to help people with dementia and their families with all their queries and concerns. It is part funded by the Department of Health.

People who are newly diagnosed will be introduced by a professional from the memory clinic to the adviser service and encouraged to accept the help it offers.

It will also be available to those referred by their GP or care worker, and people are welcome to get in touch direct.

Information about how to contact the service will be widely available once it is launched, and will also be on the NHS Medway Website.

For more information contact Wendy Alleway or Ben Gladstone, NHS Medway, 7 – 8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, telephone 01634 335219 or email wendy.alleway@medwaypct.nhs.uk or Ben.gladstone@medway.gov.uk or visit the website: www.medwaypct.nhs.uk

8. New service for carers

Carers can now share their problems with trained counsellors by either the click of the mouse or a telephone call.

Carers' Line Medway is a free service that is provided by Care First, an independent organisation, on behalf of Medway Council.

Trained counsellors are available to provide support for carers who need to talk to someone about a range of issues connected with their caring responsibility, including family and personal problems, bereavement and health-related issues.

Carers living in Medway can access this service by phoning 0800 1974517. Counselling is also available online at: www.care-first.co.uk

To obtain the username and password, please email counsellingforcarers@medway.gov.uk



For more information contact Laura Patrick, Medway Council, email Laura.patrick@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 333333.

9. Growing Healthier Together

This week, NHS Medway launched 'A Better Medway', a year-long campaign to encourage everyone who lives and works in Medway to do something positive to improve their health over the next 12 months.

Its focus is on finding easier ways to be healthy, by encouraging each of us to take small but significant steps towards eating healthily, getting active, stopping smoking, drinking sensibly and managing stress.

The campaign, led by NHS Medway and Medway Council, uses examples of real people in Medway who have made these sorts of changes, to demonstrate that better health is not out of reach.

Each of us is challenged to sign up to at least one pledge – some examples are suggested, but tailor made pledges that suit your own lifestyle are perhaps even better.

NHS Medway Chief Executive, Marion Dinwoodie, has personally pledged to go for a walk at the weekend, every weekend.

You can make a pledge online at the website www.abettermedway.co.uk which has a wealth of practical suggestions, and interactive features.

For more information contact Emma Burns, NHS Medway, 7 – 8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, telephone 01634 335219 or 07939 235402, email emma.burns@nhs.net or visit the website: www.medwaypct.nhs.uk

10. Training opportunities

For the voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers ONLY

22 February 2010 How to Write a Feasibility Study - £35.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.00am registration and coffee) at the Riverside Centre, Gravesend, DA12 2JY.

For those responsible for the development and initiation of new projects and those who manage established projects who wish to reassess the viability and demonstrate the continuing need for their project. Particularly good for anyone needing to prepare to tender for funding

24 February 2010 CIEH H & S Level 2 Certificate - £45.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.15am registration and coffee) at Central House, Sittingbourne, ME10 4NU.



For all staff and volunteers who have a responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. Assessment by multiple choice examination. This can be conducted orally if required – please ask.

2 March 2010 Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees - £35.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.15am registration and coffee) at Alexander Centre, Faversham, ME13 8NY.

For trustees, board members and committee members of voluntary and community organisations new and old!

3 March 2010 Budget Planning For Your Business Plans - £35.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.00am registration and coffee) at Riverside Centre, Gravesend, DA12 2JY.

For CEOs, project managers and trustees who need to produce business plans and three year budget plans. A requirement for most funders when tendering.

8 March 2010 Drugs Awareness - £35.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.00am registration and coffee) at Riverside Centre, Gravesend, DA12 2JY.

For staff and volunteers who work with clients, user groups and members of their organisation who may potentially present a drugs related issue.

10 March 2010 Recruitment and Selection - £35.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.15am registration and coffee) at Central House, Sittingbourne, ME10 4NU.

For managers, supervisors and staff dealing with HR matters particularly recruitment and selection.

16, 19, 23 and 26 March 2010 HSE First Aid At Work Cert - £90.00

9.30am - 4.30pm (9.00am registration and coffee) at CVS Medway, Chatham, ME4 6BB.

All organisations require a qualified first aider. This course is aimed at staff who are the designated first aider in their place of work. Assessment by multiple-choice question paper and practical skills test

For unemployed, part time, low paid AND voluntary and community sector

9 March 2010 Phone Skills Training

9.30am – 4.30pm (9.00am coffee) at CVS Medway, Chatham, ME4 6BB.

15 April 2010 Construction Skills Certification Scheme

10.00am – 3.00pm at ATS, Gillingham, ME7 4NT.

6 May 2010 Portable Appliance Test Training

9.30am – 4.30pm (9.00am coffee) at CVS Medway, Chatham, ME4 6BB.

10 May 2010 Emergency First Aid at Work

9.30am – 4.30pm (9.00am coffee) at CVS Medway, Chatham, ME4 6BB.

For more information contact Ruth Orvis-Daniels, Training & Development Officer, North Kent Training Service, 5A New Road Avenue, Chatham, ME4 6BB, telephone 01634 818036, email nkts@cvsmedway.org.uk or visit the website: www.NKTS.co.uk



11. The National Pandemic Flu Service

The National Pandemic Flu Service ended on 11 February 2010. From that date the advice to people who think they have got flu is to stay at home and contact their GP, or get health advice from NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit the website:

www.nhs.uk

Until 31 March 2010, patients will still be able to get antivirals, if their GP thinks it appropriate, from one of the 30 pharmacies in Medway which are designated antiviral collection points. They will be told how to do this, if required. GPs and pharmacies have a copy of the list of antiviral collection points, which is also on the NHS Medway website: www.medwaypct.nhs.uk/yourhealth

It remains extremely important that people in the priority groups - those over the age of six months who are in the clinical at-risk groups for seasonal flu, pregnant women, people living with patients with compromised immune systems, and healthy children aged over six months and under five years - take up the opportunity of vaccination.

Experts advise that the swine flu virus is likely to be the predominant flu virus in the 2010 flu season. The 2010 season may start earlier than usual and there may be outbreaks sparked by the return of travellers from the southern hemisphere, where the flu season starts quite soon.

The experience of the pandemic to date is that people in the priority groups are significantly more susceptible to the swine flu virus, and have higher rates of admission to hospital and to critical care than other groups in the population. That is why it is so important that the immunisation programme continues.

People in the priority groups who have not yet been vaccinated are requested to speak to their GP practice to arrange an appointment for vaccination.

For more information contact Emma Burns, NHS Medway, 7 – 8 Ambley Green, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, ME8 0NJ, telephone 01634 335219 or 07939 235402, email emma.burns@nhs.net or visit the website: www.medwaypct.nhs.uk

12. The availability of health information to blind and partially sighted NHS users

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has commissioned research, conducted by Dr Foster Intelligence, to investigate the experiences of blind and partially sighted people who had used NHS services in the last twelve months. The study covered 600 blind and partially sighted people and 500 healthcare professionals in both primary and secondary care. 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.

If this is an issue which affects you, your family or friends, tell your LINK!

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.

To receive a copy of the Dr Foster research report, contact Hugh Huddy, RNIB, Campaigns Team, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE, telephone 0207 391 2008, email hugh.huddy@rnib.org.uk or Campaigns@rnib.org.uk or visit the website: www.rnib.org

13. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) – ‘Essential Standards of Quality and Safety’

The CQC is an independent body set up by Government to make sure people in England receive better health and adult social care.

Beginning in April this year, the CQC are introducing a new system of regulation called the ‘Essential Standards of Quality and Safety’. The new standards bring important benefits to people who use services. The CQC are starting by independently regulating all NHS providers across the country. This will impact everyone in Kent and is bound to be of interest to LINK participants.

More details of the new system will be in the Kent LINK Bulletin in or around March 2010.

For more information, contact Heather Soderlind, Care Quality Commission, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TG, telephone 03000 616161, email enquiries@cqc.org.uk or visit the website: www.cqc.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. Independence Fair - Minister for Disability, Mr Jonathan Shaw, will be attending!

Wednesday, 17 March 2010 - King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, ME7 5QT

Following previous successful Independence Fairs in Strood, Gillingham and Chatham, Medway Council undertook to consider making Independence Fairs a regular feature in their



events calendar. Feedback received from previous attendees was that the events were both useful and interesting.

The Council is keen to facilitate fairs and events that are helpful and beneficial to Medway residents.

There will be two sessions that commence at the following times:

- 10.00am to 1.00pm
- 1.30pm to 5.00 pm

The event is being widely promoted and attendance is expected to be high so if you would like to attend, please contact Kaz Macklin, Medway Council, telephone 01634 331285, email kaz.macklin@medway.gov.uk or visit the website: www.medway.gov.uk

2. Dementia Care Services

The Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust would like to invite you to discuss the new Care Planning Structure and its impact on Dementia Care Services.

The event will be held on Monday, 15 March from 11.00am to 2.30pm at the Education Centre, St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury, CT1 1TD.

For more information contact Nick Dent, St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road, Canterbury, CT1 1TD, Freephone 0800 783 9972, telephone 01227 812020, email Nicholas.Dent@kmpt.nhs.uk or visit the website: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

3. RADAR and the Appointments Commission – equipping and inspiring future leaders of the NHS

RADAR The Disability Network and the Appointments Commission are running a seminar in early 2010 to support and equip people living with Ill health, Injury or Disability (IID) to successfully apply for Non Executive Director roles with their local NHS services – this could be with the Primary Care Trust, Ambulance Service Trust, Acute or Foundation NHS Trust or with the Strategic Health Authority.

The seminar will accommodate up to 20 people living with IID who are serious about wanting to play a paid role at Board level with one of their local NHS Trusts. There is no charge for attending.

Each seminar will run from 10.00am to 4.00pm in Manchester on Monday, 1 March 2010.



If you are interested in attending or wish to find out more about these seminars then contact Nisha Patel, Events Assistant, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF, telephone 0207 503 6177, email Nisha.Patel@radar.org.uk or visit the website: www.radar.org.uk

Consultations

1. Medway LINK Hygiene Project questionnaire

Authorised Visitors of the Kent and Medway LINKs have now visited almost all of the county's acute hospital sites as part of this project to review hygiene procedures.

The next stage is to ask your experience of hospital hygiene. If you have visited or been a patient at one of our large hospitals, this is your opportunity to tell us your views of the cleanliness of the hospital you visited.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it by Monday, 1 March 2010 using the following freepost address:

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

Alternatively, you can complete an online survey using the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KY2GNBH>

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 01303 297050.

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

2. Should information about medicine be available online?

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are currently thinking about making information about medicines available online. This will be a big decision for them and they want your views on it – is it a good idea? What difference, if any, would such a resource make to you? How would you use a resource like this?

They are running an online discussion and would love to have your voice added to the conversation. The discussion is available at:

www.medinfodiscussion.org

MEDWAY LINK Bulletin

Supported by Kent & Medway Networks

19 February 2010 - Issue 23



For those of you who have not heard of MHRA, it is the government agency responsible for ensuring medicines and medical devices work and are acceptably safe.

The discussion focuses on Patient Information Leaflets (PILs) and Summaries of Product Characteristics (SPCs), and the proposal is to put a definitive database of these online. You can read, rate and add ideas to the discussion until 8 March 2010, during which time it is hoped to hear from as many people as possible, ranging from health professionals and patients to members of the public.

Find out more about the discussion, read ideas and add your own now at www.medinfodiscussion.org

For more information contact Vanda Thomas, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 1 Lambeth High Street, London, SE17 7JN, telephone 020 7735 9141, email vanda.thomas@rpsgb.org or visit the website: www.rpsgb.org.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)