Helping you live your best life in west Kent

Welcome to our summer newsletter. In this edition we share details of how the NHS in Kent and Medway is planning to change the way some aspects of health and care services are organised to provide more joined-up care, and invite you to give your views.

Joining up is very much a theme throughout the following pages as we share details of how our GP practices have, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan, formed primary care networks, also referred to as PCNs.

I’m delighted that we are also sharing news that a team from west Kent has been named a regional champion in this year’s NHS Parliamentary Awards. The award, for work to help people with social, emotional or practical problems get connected to groups and activities, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation.

As you will read, there are many positive and exciting changes happening in west Kent, but we can’t achieve any of this without you. In this newsletter there’s a particular focus on patient and public participation in the NHS and details of how you can get involved locally.

Last but by no means least, I’d really encourage you to read the wealth of information we’ve included on keeping safe and well in the sunshine. I hope you enjoy the read and the summer holidays.

Ian Ayres
Managing Director
NHS West Kent CCG

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The NHS in Kent and Medway is planning to change the way some aspects of health and care services are organised so they can provide better, more joined-up care.

The intention is for Kent and Medway to become an integrated care system with:

- GP practices working together in networks – called ‘primary care networks’
- four new ‘integrated care partnerships’ across Kent and Medway, drawing together all the NHS organisations in a given area and working more closely with health improvement services and social care
- a single commissioning organisation for Kent and Medway, led by local doctors, to take a ‘bird’s eye view’ of health priorities for local people and look at where shared challenges, such as cancer and mental health, should be tackled together.

Dr Bob Bowes, chair of NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said:

“I and my fellow CCG chairs across Kent and Medway want people to be able to live their best life, and get great treatment, care and support when they need it.

“Until people need health and care services, most have no idea how many organisations there are or how complicated it can be to find the person you need to talk to. Sometimes services duplicate one another. Sometimes there are gaps. That is not good for patients or carers, it is frustrating for staff, and it is not the best use of NHS funds.

“Over the last three years, the CCGs have made real progress by working with the rest of the local NHS, social care and public health as the Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.

“Now we collectively want to change some things about the way health services are organised. We believe this will unlock improvements in care for patients and help us meet rising demand.”

A document setting out full details of the plans, and a summary can be found [https://kentandmedway.nhs.uk/workstreams/systemtransformation/](https://kentandmedway.nhs.uk/workstreams/systemtransformation/) Over the coming weeks, every clinical commissioning group in Kent and Medway will be discussing the plan at their governing body meetings.

As an integrated care system, Kent and Medway will have:

- **42 primary care networks** from 1 July 2019
  - each covering (on average) 30,000 to 50,000 people
  - own funding = employ people and provide some services

- **4 integrated care partnerships** from April 2020
  - consisting of:
    - hospital
    - community
    - mental health
    - commissioning organisations
    - primary care networks
  - which may be formed by the eight existing CCGs merging or working as one

- **1 system commissioner for the NHS**

Local people are encouraged to respond to the plans by Friday, 16 August by filling in an online survey at [www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk](http://www.kentandmedway.nhs.uk) or send your feedback by post (Freepost KENT & MEDWAY NHS, New Hythe Lane, Aylesford, Kent ME20 6WT) or email [comms.kentandmedway@nhs.net](mailto:comms.kentandmedway@nhs.net)

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/KentAndMedway) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/KMhealthandcare)
Primary Care Networks
This year sees GP practices across the country form Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

It’s an approach that healthcare professionals and patients are already familiar with here in west Kent, where GP practices are already working in clusters.

Instead of the seven clusters practices have been used to working in, there will be nine PCNs in west Kent. The networks will include a broader range of staff working with GPs, such as clinical pharmacists and social prescribers.

Improving wellbeing in care homes
Health and care professionals providing services to people living in west Kent’s care homes are working together to improve residents’ quality of life, health and wellbeing.

Staff from care homes, GP practices, hospitals, Kent County Council (KCC), community services and a number of other organisations gathered for the third NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Health in Care Homes Summit.

The summit is part of the CCG’s Health in Care Homes Strategy.

First bricks ready for new medical centre
GPs and construction teams came together at the beginning of June to mark the formal start of the build to create a new medical centre in Tonbridge town centre.

Doctors from Tonbridge Medical Group joined developers Assura and Kent-based contractor Jenner as the second phase of construction got under way.

The new building will create a surgery for Tonbridge Medical Group, giving the practice team the facilities to care for many more patients.

The new premises will be large enough for the Pembury Road and Higham Lane teams to come together in one modern, purpose-built facility.

It will be big enough to run minor surgery, house a pharmacy and have the space to deliver services such as a wellbeing clinic.

The building will incorporate technology such as photovoltaic panels to help reduce energy use for the building – designed to achieve BREEAM ‘excellent’ status.

“There is no one thing I liked most about the event, all of it was useful”
(Care Home Manager)

“It was an ideal opportunity to discuss problems and talk to others”
(Acute trust team member)

“I liked being able to speak to other professionals and discuss issues and concerns as well as positive aspects”
(Senior carer)
Update on local care hubs

Work is currently under way to help identify potential sites for west Kent's local care hubs.

NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group’s Governing Body members agreed to look at building three local care ‘main hubs’ in the Maidstone, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks areas, with the possibility of two further ‘mini-hubs’ in the Weald of Kent and Aylesford.

The next stage of the process will be to select the preferred options and look at how services would need to work in the hubs to provide maximum benefits to patients.

Social prescribing success

People are feeling less lonely and better supported thanks to a scheme being trialled by the NHS in west Kent, in partnership with the charity Involve Kent.

Over the last six months, five social prescribing link workers have been placed in five GP practices in west Kent as part of Involve Kent’s Connect for Wellbeing scheme.

Specialist staff and volunteers are available to help patients with social, emotional or practical needs by helping them to connect with groups or activities that appeal to them – reducing social isolation and getting people more active.

Early findings show how:

100%
Everyone who identified as ‘most severely lonely and isolated’ felt a significant improvement, and

66%
two-thirds (66 per cent) of people increased their levels of physical activity by an average of 90 minutes a week.

Regional ward for addressing the needs of vulnerable adults

In July, Kent Community Health NHS (KCHFT) won a regional award for their work on a pilot scheme, commissioned by NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, to address the unmet social, medical, physiological and emotional needs of adults identified as frequent users of urgent care services, principally Accident and Emergency departments. The NHS Parliamentary Awards, Regional Champion for the South East award, was presented to the team (see photo on the cover page) for their excellent work in urgent and emergency care.

The Frequent Users’ Service, which has been running since 2017, uses a case management approach and works intensively with each individual to find effective solutions and support.

For more on this and other news from West Kent CCG visit the news pages on the CCG’s website https://www.westkentccg.nhs.uk/news/
More than 500 people have signed up to be part of the Kent Health Network in west Kent.

The Health Network enables patients, public and voluntary groups to get involved in how local NHS services are planned and designed.

A campaign, launched in March, hoped to recruit 150 people living or working in the area to the network.

The target was smashed, with more than 350 people signing up through social media alone in eight weeks, taking the total of people in the Kent Health Network in west Kent to 573.

The biggest percentage of people signing up through social media were facebook users aged 65 plus.

Why not sign up to the health network today?

https://www.westkentccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/west-kent-health-network/

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Small changes can add up to a huge difference to your health. One You Kent is aimed mainly at 40 to 74-year-olds but open to all.

The Kent County Council-led initiative offers a variety of resources to help the county’s residents make lifestyle changes to improve their health. It is supported by the district and borough councils in west Kent which all run health improvement services as part of One You.

So if you are looking to become more active, give up smoking, cut down on drinking or maintain a healthy weight, visit www.oneyoukent.org.uk to sign up for free support in your area.

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Latest news on how we are transforming services in Kent and Medway

The latest issue of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership’s (STP) news bulletin is available online: https://kentandmedway.nhs.uk/kent-medway-stp-bulletins/ In this month’s news we update you on the development of primary care networks and share with you our plans for how we are going to transform services over the next few years. There is a link to a survey in the bulletin and we would value your feedback if you can take a few minutes to complete it. Please share it with friends and colleagues, the more responses, the better!

You can subscribe to the monthly bulletins here: https://nhs.us5.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=02839480f06ca808cd31129a4&id=1ed1623cbc
Summer health and wellbeing

The sun’s out (hopefully) and summer holidays, whether you are staying at home or going away, are here! Here’s some top tips for keeping well in the warmer weather.

Top tips:
✓ try to be in the shade between 11am and 3pm
✓ make sure you never burn
✓ cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses
✓ take extra care with children
✓ use at least factor 30 sunscreen
✓ sun burn doesn’t just happen on holiday – you can burn in the UK, even when it is cloudy.

Keep hydrated

Make sure you drink plenty of water in hot weather and when travelling take enough with you. Avoid excess alcohol.

Lower-fat milks, tea, coffee, fruit juices and smoothies are also good options.

Limit fruit juice or smoothies to a combined total of 150ml a day, and choose diet or sugar-free soft drinks.


Be sun aware

It is never too early or late to reduce your risk of skin cancer.

While it is important for everyone to stay safe in the sun, NHS England’s ‘Cover Up, Mate’ campaign is particularly targeting men who spend long periods of time outdoors.

For the last three years, skin cancer rates have been increasing and are higher than average in the south of England, particularly in men who work in farming and construction, as well as gardeners and sports-players. It is one of the most common forms of cancers, and can be fatal.

The ABCDE moles checklist and other useful information can be found: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/melanoma-skin-cancer](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/melanoma-skin-cancer)
Hay fever

Hay fever is usually worse between late March and September, especially when it is warm, humid and windy. As the pollen count rises, one person in five is likely to suffer from the allergic condition, which causes sneezing, a runny nose and itchy eyes.

Speak to your pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give advice and suggest the best treatments, like antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays.

Top tips:
✓ put Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen
✓ wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
✓ shower and change your clothes after you’ve been outside to wash pollen off
✓ stay indoors whenever possible
✓ keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
✓ vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth.

Medicines

If you are prescribed regular medication by your GP, do remember to take your medicine with you if you are going away.

Check you have enough for the length of your trip and order more if needed in plenty of time, particularly ahead of the weekend of the August bank holiday which is on Monday 26 August this year.

Make sure you keep your medicine cabinet well stocked with antihistamines, insect repellent and bite cream as well as cold and flu remedies and painkillers.

#Betickaware

There are more ticks around at this time of year, so be tick aware by:
• knowing what ticks look like
• where they can be found
• practising prevention behaviours to help to avoid tick bites.

It is an important step towards reducing the chance of getting Lyme disease, the most common tick-borne infection in the United Kingdom.

Seek advice from your GP or dial NHS 111 if you feel unwell after being bitten by a tick, even when you don’t have a rash.

Remember to tell them you were bitten by a tick or have recently spent time outdoors.

Top tips:
✓ walk on clearly defined paths, avoid dense vegetation, wear light coloured clothing so ticks can be easily spotted and brushed off, or use a repellent such as DEET
✓ make it a habit to carry out a tick check - look over your clothes and body regularly if you are outdoors and brush off any ticks you see
✓ carry out a thorough tick check when at home by removing your clothing and having a good look and feel for ticks – look out for anything as small as a speck of dirt or a freckle
✓ if you do get bitten, removing the tick quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk of infection.

Find out more about what to do if you have been bitten by a tick.
www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease
Patient Participation Week last month (10-15 June 2019) celebrated the essential role patients play in achieving excellence in general practice.

All year in west Kent, active practice Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) organise health information sessions, collect views and feedback, lead walking and cycling groups and volunteer in many roles.

PPG Chairs Group

Every other month the chairs of patient participation groups meet with local health care commissioners at west Kent PPG Chairs Group.

Last year the group was involved in:

- Developing and distributing a patient information booklet for End of Life Care
- Supporting the engagement process around the review of assisted fertility services (IVF)
- Taking part in discussions around how healthcare is evolving locally
- Sharing the Improving Access to GP Appointments survey
- Raising awareness of a range of local care and support services to keep people safe and well
- Publicising the pilot scheme of the improved musculoskeletal care pathway, designed to help speed up access to treatment locally.

A more detailed report of patient and public involvement in 2018/19 can be found in NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group’s annual report, which is available on the CCG’s website.

To find out more about your practice’s PPG, ask at your GP practice.

Chair of PPG Chairs’ Group

Tony Broadrick is Chair of the PPG Chairs’ Group and attends West Kent CCG’s Governing Body meetings as an observer.

Together with the CCG’s Lay Member for Patient and Public engagement Gerald Heddell, Tony provides an essential link between the PPGs and the CCG’s Governing Body, feeding back key themes and issues.

Read on to meet the chair of one PPG...
**Spotlight on PPG Chair**

**Name:** Bob MacDonald, PPG Chair for West Malling Group Practice

**Age:** 77

**Occupation:** Retired. Bob lives in Kings Hill, West Malling, with his wife, Jan. Two of his three daughters are married and live in Kings Hill with six grandchildren.

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**Q: How long have you been in your role at the PPG?**

**A:** 18 months.

**Q: What does your role involve?**

**A:** Recruitment and development of the PPG and overseeing the PPG working in partnership with the practice to improve services.

We meet approximately every six weeks or so to discuss the work plan and decide who does what.

**Q: Who else is on your team?**

**A:** We have a vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, as well as committee members. We currently have eight people on the team but are in the process of recruiting some more. We are all volunteers.

**Q: What skills experience do you need to become a member of the PPG?**

**A:** We welcome people from all backgrounds. It’s important that the PPG is representative of the 20,500 patients at the West Malling Medical Group Practice. We have an older population of people but at the same time we have a lot of young professionals with families who have moved into the area.

**Q: Why did you decide to get involved in your local PPG Group?**

**A:** When I decided to sell my business and retire I still wanted to do something to use my skills and experience. I also wanted to get involved in something that would make a difference. Rather than wondering and complaining about local GP services, I decided that I would do something that would help improve things.

**Q: What advice would you give to anyone who would like to get involved locally with their PPG group?**

**A:** Ask your practice or check out their website for information. Most practices will have some information available, including details of how to join.

**Q: How much time do you need to give?**

**A:** It’s entirely up to the individual. Some people will only be able to spare a few hours each month, others more. But, no matter how much time you have to spare, PPG groups value the input they get from each and every one their members.

**Q: What has been your greatest challenge?**

**A:** Reaching out to a wide range of audiences has been, by far, the biggest challenge. We have been developing our social media presence on Facebook and developing our email mailing list. My colleague Barry Evans has been instrumental in building links with local journalists to get us coverage in the press, as well as on the Parish Council’s website.

**Q: What has been your greatest success?**

**A:** We recently started to run a series of information events in the community that have been a real success. Genesis Care – experts in innovative treatments and care for people with cancer were very helpful in hosting these events. We have run two breast cancer/ menopause/Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) events and one men’s health event on prostrate and bladder cancer.

Consultant cancer surgeons and oncologists, menopause and HRT specialists came and gave illustrated talks and smaller group discussion sessions.

**Q: What are your plans for the future?**

**A:** As well as the information events, we are also planning on developing some listening events and plan to run a patient survey. We are hoping to go out and speak to as many patients as we can to get their views on different subjects as possible.

We will also keep reviewing our communication channels to make sure that all patients are kept up to date with developments in the practice and can have a voice on matters they regard as important.
A focus on dementia

More than 3,800 people in west Kent are living with diagnosed dementia but we know that yet more people are living with illness undiagnosed.

NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is working to improve diagnosis rates and support for people living with dementia, so that everyone receives the care they need.

Specialist dementia nurses

A specialist service aimed at supporting people living with dementia in west Kent is being launched this summer. Seven dementia nurses have been hired to work alongside clusters of GP surgeries to support people affected by dementia and their families.

The service, which is funded by NHS West Kent CCG and delivered by NHS Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT), has been set up to increase the wellbeing of dementia patients, improve their quality of life and reduce the time patients have to wait to get assessed and treated.

Specialist dementia nurses will:
- help to identify and assess people with a likely diagnosis of dementia
- offer support and advice to those with a new diagnosis
- provide sleep advice, prescribing advice and annual reviews, including planning for the future, counselling, signposting to relevant services, support for carers and help people manage any symptoms they might experience.

This new service will not only help people and their families access the support, education and advice that they need, but it could also reduce the time people spend attending different NHS services, such as memory loss clinics.

Case study

**Situation:** Doris, is aged 81 years and has complex health needs including Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) and diabetes. Her husband is her main carer. He has raised concerns as she has started to miss her medication due to memory problems and has started to become frail with mobility problems. Doris has called an ambulance and has attended A&E three times in the past eight weeks.

**What happens:** Doris’ case is discussed in the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) cluster meetings and the dementia cluster nurse agrees to meet the carers and frailty nurse at home to conduct an assessment. Doris is diagnosed with dementia and prescribed medication to help the symptoms and her memory has improved.

The specialist dementia nurse offers Doris and her husband post-diagnostic counselling and support with practical ideas to make sure she is taking her medication. Doris’ husband is referred for a carer assessment and sign posted to the Alzheimer’s Society for peer support.

**The result:** Doris has not attended A&E in the past 12 weeks and is much better at remembering to take her medication. Doris’ husband feels well supported and less isolated as a carer.

Spotting the signs

A paper-based screening tool is being introduced in west Kent’s care homes to help staff identify the signs of dementia in their residents.

The nationally recognised DeARGP Screening Tool is supported by the Alzheimer’s Society.

When surveyed, a third of West Kent’s 71 care homes responded and 64 per cent of those homes had not heard of the tool and of those who had, only 62 per cent had actually used it.

Over the summer, all Care Homes in West Kent will be encouraged to start using this resource.
Pharmacists
Pharmacists can offer help and advice on many minor illnesses, such as colds or fever, which can be safely treated at home without the need to see your GP. They can also sell a range of medication, often at lower cost than a prescription, so saving you and the NHS money. If you don’t pay for your prescriptions, some pharmacies offer free medication for specific conditions. Some also offer health improvement services such as stop smoking and weight management. To find the opening times of your nearest pharmacy, visit the NHS Find a Pharmacy website.

NHS 111
If you urgently need medical care when your GP practice is closed and the pharmacy can’t help, please ring NHS 111 for advice. They can arrange for you to see an out-of-hours GP service if necessary. The NHS 111 phone service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A fully trained adviser will answer your call and help you find the right service or give advice about how to look after yourself.

GP – evening and weekends too
As well as daytime appointments, you can also book to see a GP, nurse or other health professional in the evening or at the weekend. The extra appointments service works alongside existing provision to help you get the right care at the right time. The appointments will not necessarily be at your usual GP practice, but the health professionals treating you will be able to see your full medical records, with their consent. Patients who need an appointment will be allocated the most suitable clinician for their need. To book one of these appointments, please phone your GP practice and speak to a receptionist.

Minor injury units
If you are injured and it is not serious, you can get help from a minor injury unit (MIU). These are in Edenbridge and Sevenoaks. They can see a range of minor illnesses and injuries such as burns, sprains, cuts and foreign bodies in the eye, nose and ear.

Edenbridge War Memorial Hospital
Mill Hill, Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DA
01732 862 137
Open every day (except Christmas Day) 8.30am – 6pm
X-ray: Mon, Wed & Fri 9am -1pm / 2-5pm.

Sevenoaks Hospital
Hospital Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3PG
01732 470 200
Open Monday – Sunday: 8am – 8pm
X-ray: Monday to Friday 8.45am – 5.45pm

Don’t forget the Emergency Department (ED) is for life-threatening or serious illnesses and injuries. Please help to keep it free for those who need it.

Do you know which health service to use when in west Kent?
Here’s a reminder of what’s available and how they can help…

Which health service when