

*Your LINK for improving health and social care
Your future local HealthWatch*



a LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK

24 May 2011

Mr Nick Chard
Chairman
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Kent County Council
Members' Suite
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XQ

Dear Nick

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 10 June 2011

Thank you for your letter of 26 April 2011 seeking LINK evidence on the subject of 'NHS Financial Sustainability' for the above meeting.

LINK Governors considered your request at their meeting on 18 May 2011 and asked me to respond.

The LINK proposes to enter the debate on funding in the NHS locally. LINK representatives will attend the meeting on Tuesday, 10 June 2011.

The Kent LINK will be very interested in your findings in so far as it will provide useful evidence for identifying where the LINK should be focusing its efforts – to ensure services are in place / being planned to meet patient need. This is particularly important in the changing NHS environment.

Likewise it will be important for local people to know the results of your review – presented in plain English. This would be with a view to ensuring more awareness of the impact of less funding - v - increasing demand on the NHS. It will also warn of the choices they may be required to make, acknowledging the responsibility of individual patients.

In response to the questions posed in your letter:

- *What are the challenges to ensuring the NHS in Kent is financially sustainable?*
In brief, the county has an increasing aging population with an ever increasing cost of treatments. Matching need with funds available will always be a challenge.

Continued ...

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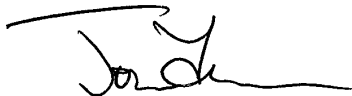
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- *Are there any implications for the range and quality of health services available to the people of Kent as a result of any measures being taken to achieve or maintain financial sustainability?*

If funds are restricted because there is less or there are more demands on the system there will be a need for further radicalisation. The LINK will be keen to look at the HOSC's report and findings of its current review so that it can consider what its focus can or should be.

In the interests of Kent residents using the Trust's services, LINK Governors expressed concerns around the sanctions being placed on Medway NHS Foundation Trust. Is the KCC HOSC including this particular Trust in its review as it is used by Kent people in the Swale area?

Yours sincerely



John Fletcher
Chairman
Kent LINK Governors' Group

cc Roger Kendall, Kent LINK Governor
Mark Fittock, Kent LINK Governor
Brenda O'Neill, Kent & Medway Networks