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PRESS RELEASE

EU funding boosts new diabetes project for Kent

More than 1,000 people with type 2 diabetes¹ are set to benefit from an innovative new EU-funded project involving health organisations from across Kent and Medway. Called DWELL (Diabetes and WELLbeing), the cross-border initiative involves eight partners from the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and France², including Blackthorn Trust, Canterbury Christ Church University, the Health and Europe Centre, Kent County Council and Medway Community Healthcare.

Type 2 diabetes affects 28.8 million people across the EU and can be treated with a healthy diet and increased physical activity. The DWELL programme will enable patients to access tailored support, empowering them to self-manage their condition and improve their well-being. The project will take an individual holistic approach, identifying through one-to-one interviews what will motivate each person to make long-term lifestyle changes, rather than focusing solely on a person's medical condition as is currently often the case.

The project was approved and funded by the EU Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014-2020 (co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund) which awarded €1.9m (£1.6m) to support the project over four years.

Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health at Kent County Council said: "DWELL will co-create a 12-week patient support programme of 'pick and mix' options and a training package for staff to help them deliver the programme in the years ahead. Both products will be designed by, and implemented in, all four countries represented in the partnership, making them highly transferable to other countries also looking for solutions to this common issue.

"Through this project we want to try new ways of working to empower individuals to be in control of their condition. The programme will provide individuals and professionals with skills and tools to effectively manage diabetes and support people with diabetes to live life to its full."

¹ The 1000 people will be:

- Those with type 2 diabetes who are poorly managing it;
- Drawn from patients at partner organisations in France, Kent, Medway and The Netherlands;
- They will be both self-selecting and via referral onto the programme from their GP

²Blackthorn Trust, UK; Medway Community Healthcare, UK; The Health and Europe Centre, UK ; Kent County Council, UK; Canterbury Christ Church University, UK; Artevelde University College Ghent, Belgium; Kinetic Analysis, The Netherlands; Hospital Centre of Douai, France.

Julie Webster, Medway Community Healthcare's associate director, primary care, commented:

"Medway Community Healthcare is very excited to be working on a project that will have an impact on the health and wellbeing of our local communities. We're delighted to have the opportunity to be working with such experienced partners to empower people with type 2 diabetes living in Medway."

Professor Eleni Hatzidimitriadou, Head of Public Health, Midwifery and Social Work at Canterbury Christ Church University, added: "Previous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluating self-management and education programmes for people with diabetes. There have been few evaluations of such programmes, despite it being intrinsic to the understanding of long term impact and value of such programmes."

"The evaluation of the DWELL programme, led by Canterbury Christ Church University, is designed to have a strong patient and public involvement. It will enable comprehensive assessment of all the project's aspects, including outcomes and impact for patients, professionals and services in all delivery country sites in four key areas: staff training, patient outcomes, cost benefits and systems/process of interventions."

As a result of improving patients' long-term health and well-being, it is estimated that the project will see a 30% per person reduction to state funded health services per year (anticipated at €1.25m (£1.05m) per 1000 patients per year).

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Type 2 Diabetes:

Diabetes is a long term non communicable disease of huge societal & economic concern not just a clinical issue. Health services will be overwhelmed by diabetes and its complications if whole society strategies are not put in place. According to the International Diabetes Federation, countries need a stronger strategic approach. Type 2 diabetes (90% of those with the disease) is acquired in later life & can be successfully controlled through healthy lifestyle choices. In 2012, approximately 32m people in the EU had diabetes. On average 10% of state healthcare expenditure is on treating it & related complications. Research shows that intensive self-management is required with currently no standard approach. Initiatives to increase effective, low cost self-management are essential to the sustainability of treatment.

Interreg 2 Seas: <http://www.interreg2seas.eu/>

Interreg 2 Seas 2014-2020 is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme covering England, France, the Netherlands and Belgium (Flanders). The Programme is part-financed by the European

Regional Development Fund and has a total of €241m (£203m) ERDF to co-finance projects in the 2014 - 2020 period.

Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury Christ Church University is a modern university with a particular strength in higher education for the public services.

With 17,000 students across Kent and Medway, its courses span a wide range of academic and professional subject areas.

- 95% of our UK undergraduates were in employment or further studies six months after completing their studies*.
- We are one of the South East's largest providers of education, training and skills leading to public service careers.

*2013/14 Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey

Medway Community Healthcare

Medway Community Healthcare is a social enterprise Community Interest Company (CIC), providing community NHS services to the people of Medway. Formed from the services directly provided by NHS Medway, it has a strong history of partnership working with local GPs, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, Medway Council and other local stakeholders.

With over 1,300 staff it provides a wide range of both planned and unscheduled care in local settings such as healthy living centres, inpatient units and people's homes.

As an organisation that provides a range of high quality clinical services across Medway, it competes for services with other providers from the NHS, independent and voluntary sectors; using knowledge and expertise to stay up to date on local new business opportunities.

Our commitment is to 'lead the way in excellent healthcare' and our employees, who have the opportunity to become shareholders and influence business decisions, all have a significant role to play in delivering this commitment to the communities we serve.

Kent County Council

Kent County Council became responsible for key areas of Public Health following changes to the Health and Social Care Act in 2013. Its overriding aims are to improve and protect the health of the Kent population, and improve the quality, effectiveness and access to, health and social care services. For further information contact Gemma Smith at Kent County Council Media Centre on 03000 416699 or e-mail gemma.smith@kent.gov.uk

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