

**North Tyneside LINK
Board Meeting
24 January 2012**

Communication and membership report

1. Communication activities to date

E-newsletter

LINK January e-newsletter was distributed on Thursday 12 January 2012.

Newsletter

Stronger Voice newsletter was distributed on 13 December. The next Stronger Voice newsletter will be distributed on Tuesday 14 February.

Website

Website visitors:

November 3806

December 4012

Average monthly visitors (Jan to Dec 2011) 3812

Average monthly visitors (Jan to Dec 2010) 2597

The LINK North Tyneside facebook page was live from December 2011. To go to our facebook page you need to be registered with facebook and search for LINK North Tyneside. We are adding events, links and news to the facebook page.

The LINK blog page has been in existence since 2009 but is not well used. Improvements to the operation of the blog would require time and additional funding. As the LINK branding will cease to exist with the establishment of HealthWatch we will continue to work with the existing blog page for the life of LINK.

Publicity

We promoted LINK's health and wellbeing forum and wellbeing and mental health forum through the LINK Stronger Voice newsletter and e-newsletter, distribution of posters to community venues and at events and through the VODA newsletter. We sent the e-flyer to other organisations for distribution to staff, volunteers and service users.

Advertising

Lifestyle magazine to be distributed at the end of January and beginning of February has a Whitley Bay supplement with a ¼ page LINK advert and ¼ page editorial about LINK activities.

Media

New releases issued:

- Wellbeing and mental health forum (January 2012)

2. Membership

We now currently have **305** LINK members so far. (**218** Individuals) (**75** Group) (**12** Board)

2.2 Issues Raised

An issue regarding the lack of lip reading trainers and courses within North Tyneside has been raised by a LINK organisational member.

Further investigation has shown that the RNID published a report on the state of lip reading classes nationally and that the NE was said to have poor provision. The difficulty seems to be that lip reading is not seen as a health care issue and classified as social and educational. The RNID are lobbying parliament to change this classification.

LINK could with our colleagues at NTC and NoT PCT/CCGs work to encourage local colleges to take action, however we know from our contacts with Newcastle College that they have been trying to set up a lip reading course but this has not been possible because of the national shortage of tutors.

The organisational member which raised the issue has provided a class locally that is now under threat because of lack of funding. Our local research shows that there is a need locally for this service and support for it to continue, however, without funding assistance this may become increasingly difficult to maintain.

Several BME issues were brought to LINK

- An Algerian man had difficulties accessing NHS services because he had been moved around the north east without choice, this is a common problem with refugees seeking asylum.
- An Iranian gentleman had his section 4 money stopped and was made destitute, he was only able to access emergency care at a walk-in centre as his GP would no longer register him as a patient
- An African lady was admitted to a mental health ward at NTGH, the lady felt her religious and spiritual beliefs were misunderstood and felt she was being treated differently because of this.
- A young lady from Guinea whose first language was French with a particular dialect was seen by a consultant who thought it inappropriate to book an interpreter because he could speak French; she felt he didn't understand her because he spoke a different dialect.
- A Russian gentleman had been seeing a psychologist in CMHT who had made him feel very afraid because he didn't understand about seeking asylum; he was also seen by various professionals and after repeating his story several times became increasingly upset and anxious.
- Appointment letters are sent in English, people have difficulty understanding if this is not their first language.
- Professionals aren't always aware or concerned about the costs of using interpreters, so don't use them, which creates future health issues for the patient if health problems are left undiagnosed and untreated.

3. Planned activities

Tuesday 31 January 2012

1.00pm – 4.00pm Health & Wellbeing Forum Meeting

The Linskill Centre
North Shields

Friday 3 February 2012

1.00pm – 3.00pm Peary House Open Day

Meg Woollam

Christine O'Brien