

## North Tyneside LINK board August 2011

### Update on the development of Local HealthWatch

Following on from the proposed evolution of Local Involvement Networks to Local HealthWatch, a new time line has been issued by the Department of Health, as shown below.

#### Time-line

March 2011	Transition plan published
July 2011	Action learning for Pathfinders begins for this year
Oct 2012	Local Authority commissions Local HealthWatch organisations
April 2013	Local Authority commissions NHS complaints advocacy services

To recap, subject to the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill, Local HealthWatch organisations will continue the functions currently provided by LINK to involve and engage the public and to report on 'enter and view' visits to premises providing care.

Subject to parliamentary approval Local HealthWatch organisations will also signpost people to information about health and social care services to promote choice. Influencing mechanisms for Local HealthWatch will be strengthened through Health and Wellbeing boards, along with the ability to hold providers to account. NHS complaints advocacy will also be provided through Local HealthWatch organisations from 2013.

During the next few months a consultation will be carried out by the Department of Health asking for views on the allocation options for distribution of additional funding to local authorities for Local HealthWatch, NHS complaints advocacy and PCT Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. The consultation will close on 24 October 2011. The outcome of this consultation may influence local developments. However, this funding will come on top of the existing funding for LINKs.

#### Developments in North Tyneside

To move this process forward locally, stakeholders in North Tyneside were invited to an initial planning meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2011 to discuss:

1. What does LINK do well and what have we learnt from the LINK experience that we would change?
2. Considering the Department of Health guidance, what do we want Local HealthWatch to be?

Feedback from stakeholders at the July meeting included:

#### Workshop 1

- LINK has good community and voluntary sector membership but this needs to go further
- LINK has developed good relationships with commissioners and service providers but needs to be more influential
- LINK produces excellent information and needs to continue to do this to keep people informed

#### Workshop 2

- HealthWatch should be the first place people think of if they have an issue or complaint about their services or they want help and advice about their services
- HealthWatch should be seen as a community champion for health and social care and should be accessible to all sections of the community
- HealthWatch should enable the community to have more influence over the development and improvement of their health and social care services and to feel a better sense of community ownership

### **Future opportunities for involvement**

A further meeting for stakeholders is planned for **14 October** to shape the development of Local HealthWatch in North Tyneside. LINK members will also have an opportunity to discuss their views on the development of Local HealthWatch at their meeting on **29 September** at the Langdale Centre.