



MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting:	North East Local Involvement Network Ambulance Committee
Details:	Wednesday 9 June 2010 at Blissability, South Shields
Present:	Ray Stephenson, Stockton LINK (Chair) Sahdia Hassen, NEAS (Public Relations Officer) Mike Hemingway, County Durham LINK Mike Dalton, County Durham LINK Mike McNulty, Sunderland LINK Pat Bottrill, North Tyneside LINK Ken Patterson, Northumberland LINK Caryn Roberts, Northumberland LINK Audrey Clarke, Redcar & Cleveland John Simpson, Redcar & Cleveland LINK Audrey Woore, Hartlepool LINK Violet Rook, Newcastle LINK (Vice Chair) Sharon Bell, South Tyneside LINK
In attendance:	Tony Dell, NEAS (Chairman) Peter Wood, NEAS (Non Executive Director) Rachel King, NEAS (Business Planning & Performance Manager) Paul Bolton, NEAS (Local Capacity Manager) (for Item 7) Gemma Wilson, NEAS (Customer Care Officer) Audrey Turnbull, NEAS (Governor Support Officer) (minutes)

No.		Action by
	Ray Stephenson welcomed Tony Dell, Chairman of NEAS and Gemma Wilson, Customer Care Officer for NEAS.	
1.	APOLOGIES	
	Apologies were received from: Mark Cotton, NEAS (Head of Comms & Public Involvement), Trevor Gauntlett, Sunderland LINK (Vice Chair) and Stephen Thomas, Hartlepool LINK.	
2.	MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 APRIL 2010	
	The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.	
3.	MATTERS ARISING	
	The draft Quality Accounts had been submitted to the Plain English Campaign and one or two minor amendments had been suggested. The Accounts were to be discussed later on the agenda.	
4.	TONY DELL, CHAIRMAN OF NEAS	
	Tony Dell outlined how he thought the ambulance service would be affected by the new Government.	
	Early indications were that the NHS would be immune from some of the sweeping cuts that were anticipated in other public sector budgets. However, NEAS was involved in a cost improvement programme and Paul Bolton's presentation outlined one of the Trust's planned savings to local costs.	

	It was expected that the Health Service would be reconfigured and that there would be a Public Health Board chaired by the Secretary of State and a separate independent Commissioning Board chaired by the Chief Executive of the NHS. The Commissioning Board would provide money directly to GPs (or a consortia) and the PCT would no longer be involved in the commissioning process.	
	The Strategic Health Authority was going to be phased out and therefore work was being undertaken to ensure that there was some cohesion between the DoH and the Health Service. It looked unlikely that there would be a national ambulance service and there was a keen wish for ambulance services to become Foundation Trusts. NEAS was working on their bid for FT status.	
	Slower to happen. The Government appeared to be setting itself against targets for the sake of targets and NEAS has long thought that patient outcomes were a better set of statistics for its service to be measured against.	
	Members queried if the change in the funding stream would affect NEAS' services and received comfort from Tony Dell that the Trust's services should remain unchanged although it would just be negotiating with different commissioners.	
	In relation to cost cutting and savings, members queried the PTS route planning facility as in some instances ambulances appeared to be running nearly empty. Tony Dell said that NEAS was currently reviewing its transport fleet and as the Patient Transport Service was work in progress all suggestions and/or questions on the service should be directed to Sahdia Hassen. Sahdia would ensure that all improvement suggestions were fed back to the relevant team.	ALL Sahdia Hassen
5.	LINKs Ambulance Forum Annual Report	
	Some members said that they had not received a copy of the LINKs Ambulance Forum Annual Report and it was agreed that the deadline for comments would be extended. Therefore, this item would be put on the August agenda for discussion.	Sahdia Hassen
	Sahdia Hassen asked that everyone ensure that their contact details are up to date and to inform her of their latest e-mail address/address. Sahdia's e-mail is sahdia.hassen@neas.nhs.uk	ALL
	Sharon Bell requested that a copy of the report be forwarded to her as she had just taken over responsibility for attending the LINKs meetings and had been unaware of the action required. Also any other information that would be useful.	Sahdia Hassen
6.	QUALITY ACCOUNTS UPDATE	
	Rachel King reported that she had circulated the latest draft of the Quality Accounts. The page numbers still needed to be inserted and the text in red was awaiting confirmation by the Plain English Campaign although the remainder of the document had received a crystal mark indicating that it was easy to read.	
	The following changes were highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicators that would measure the Trust's performance during the forthcoming year had been simplified; • On pages 27 and 29 the two sections highlighted in red were believed to be 	

	<p>of particular interest to members as they outlined what had been undertaken in relation to engagement this year. A direction from the Department of Health (DoH) had been received late and the Trust intended to engage more during the coming year, possibly setting up a small working group to ensure all comments were captured. Mike McNulty, Sunderland LINKs confirmed that this satisfied their concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A map had been included on page 32; and • A small summary had been added to page 3. 	
	The document was currently going through the design process which would make it easier for the reader. It would be available on the Trust's website at the end of July. Also Braille versions, etc. would be available.	
	Members were pleased with the content and length of the document. A suggestion was made that possibly a Foreword, in addition to the Introduction, could be added to explain to the general reader the need for Quality Accounts.	Rachel King
	The Chairman requested that two or three copies be distributed to each LINKs member once the final draft was prepared.	Rachel King
7.	DIRECTORY OF SERVICES	
	Paul Bolton took members through the presentation explaining that it was a model system in which the Trust was developing a Directory of Services in the region. The Directory would include almost all community providers, e.g. pharmacies, dental practices, drop-in centres, etc. It would be up to each registered service provider to inform the Trust of what resources they had available at any given point during the day/night to enable the Trust to respond to an emergency call and ensure that the patient was dealt with by the nearest available service provider for their particular "emergency". The three digit number "111" would not replace "999" but would be used for non life threatening emergencies and all calls would be taken at Newcastle. At present the Directory had been uploaded with over 2,000 service providers and care had been taken to develop the system to capture any life threatening emergency calls that came through.	
	The pilot was due to commence in July 2010 in County Durham and Darlington and it was hoped to roll it out to the whole of the region next year. It was anticipated that the system would result in considerable savings to the NHS.	
	Members queried whether the deaf community and mental health services would be included. Paul Bolton confirmed that technical adjustments had been made to the infrastructure to meet the care needs of the hard of hearing and he was meeting later in the day with the mental health community to ascertain if they could be included. A trial in North Durham was planned to ensure that the telephone triage would result in appropriate referrals to mental health services.	
	The system was web-based and it was up to each service provider to log-in and update their status. Regular governance meetings had been held in County Durham and Darlington to ensure that service providers were adhering to the requirements of the system and an audit of responses was carried out every Monday morning.	
	Members thanked Paul Bolton for his presentation which had been most informative.	
8.	"Green Bag Initiative" with Gateshead LINK – Patients taking their own	

	drugs from home into QE Hospital	
	The representatives from Gateshead LINK were not present and the Chairman commented that this item had been discussed at the previous meeting. Gemma Wilson, however, reported that she had spoken to a number of NEAS crew members as well as staff at the QE Hospital, and the system appeared to be working well.	
	Peter Wood suggested that members may benefit from a note being issued with the next Agenda outlining the "Green Bottle" initiative operated on Teesside. Peter also suggested that members would perhaps benefit from a PTS crew member being invited to the next meeting to highlight a number of issues faced by front-line staff, e.g. the different design of wheelchairs.	Sahdia Hassen
9.	NEAS Annual Report	
	Sahdia Hassen reported that once the final draft of the report had been completed it would be circulated around members.	Sahdia Hassen
10.	Location of LINKs meetings	
	<p>The practice of rotating LINKs meeting venues around the region was being questioned by a number of members due to navigational and parking difficulties encountered. A number of options were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a half-way point for all meetings – possibly Earls House outside of Durham; • Alternate meetings between two locations each time in the south and in the north of the region • Hold every meeting at NEAS' HQ at Bernicia House; Newburn, Newcastle or at the old HQ building, Scotswood House at Newcastle Business Park <p>The Chairman requested that the issue be placed on the next meeting's agenda for a full discussion.</p>	Sahdia Hassen
11.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 5 August at the Trinity Centre, James Street, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough, TS3 6LD.	ALL
	(Subsequent to the meeting, the next scheduled meeting was re-arranged to 11am on Wednesday 11 August 2010 at Trinity Centre, James Street, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough, TS3 6LD.)	