



Invitation to have your say on better health and social care

People, communities and organisations in North Tyneside are invited to have their say about health and social care services in the borough at North Tyneside LINK's annual event on Tuesday 22 March. The event at the Langdale Centre in Howdon, Wallsend from 9.30am to 3pm, is free to attend and open to anyone with an interest in health care and adult social care services in North Tyneside. To book your place contact LINK on 0191 200 1429 or email link@voda.org.uk.

This event will give people the chance to hear what has improved so far and to say what health and social care issues they think LINK should be tackling in 2011. At the event Paul Hanson, Strategic Director of Community Services, North Tyneside Council will be presenting his views on how LINK has contributed to better health and social care services for North Tyneside residents. Phil Clow, Assistant Director Commissioning North Tyneside, and Rachel Chapman, Director of Public Engagement and Communications, NHS North of Tyne will speak about LINK members' involvement in the improvement of local health services. There will also be a chance to meet LINK's staff, board members and representatives and to network with members and health and social care providers.

Chair of North Tyneside LINK, resident John Robson, said "LINK has made some really positive changes in health and social care. Our members have been involved in the plans for a new emergency care hospital and improvements to North Tyneside General Hospital. They've looked into how easy it is to get GP appointments and what information people need about social care. Young people working with LINK have produced and appeared in a dvd about how they wanted to be treated by health and social care professionals."

John continues "There are so many different ways people can get involved and have a say in how the things that are important to them are run. LINK has got the contacts and power to actually change things for the better so it's really important for local people to get involved."

We all use health and social care services at some point in our lives, or know someone who does. To give you, the people who use these services, a chance to be involved in how they are run, Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) have been set up in every area of the country. North Tyneside LINK is a network of people, groups and organisations that investigate and listen to the views of the public in terms of the health and social care issues that are important to them. LINK then works with the people who provide and commission services to improve things based on the suggestions and ideas of its members.

North Tyneside LINK Press Release 14 March 2011

If you would like to become a member of LINK or are interested in learning more about its work, contact the team on 0191 200 1429, email link@voda.org.uk or visit the website www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk. It is free to join and anyone with an interest in health and social care services in North Tyneside can become a member.

... ends...

Press contact: for further information or photographs contact Communications Worker Meg Woollam on 0191 200 8563 or email meg.woollam@voda.org.uk

Editor's notes

1. **Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)** were introduced by the Department of Health in April 2008 and aim to give communities a stronger voice in how their health and social care services are delivered. Run by local individuals and groups and independently supported - the role of LINKs is to find out what people want, monitor local services and to use their powers to hold them account. Visit www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk for more information.
2. North Tyneside LINK is hosted by North Tyneside VODA (Voluntary Organisation's Development Agency). VODA, the voluntary and community sector infrastructure body in North Tyneside, provides independent specialised support for voluntary and community groups and volunteers in the borough. This includes advice on setting up and developing community and voluntary groups, training, information, developing networks and partnerships, ICT and recruiting, placing and supporting volunteers. For more information visit www.voda.org.uk.