



## **Council to Review Respite Services following LINK Members' Report**

North Tyneside Council are to review their respite care services for older people, following a report by members of North Tyneside Local Involvement Network (LINK).

LINK is a network of local people and groups who are interested in improving health and social care services across the borough. The report was written after members expressed their concerns about the quality and availability of respite care services across North Tyneside. These concerns included the lack of choice in respite care, services being over-subscribed and people not being aware of their entitlement to respite care for the people they look after.

The definition of North Tyneside Council's 'breaks service' (also referred to as respite care) is one which actually gives a carer a break from direct responsibility of supervising or caring for someone by providing a service to that person.

Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009, some 419 people received respite care (source: North Tyneside Council). Through interviews and focus groups with service users and carers, the report found that, although some service users said they 'quite like' their time in respite, the majority said they 'put up with it for the

sake of their carers.’ Common complaints were lack of activities to do while in respite, the cost of respite breaks and ‘it leaves me feeling depressed.’

There were a number of positive comments, however, particularly from those accessing RAF respite care.

Written by LINK member Sheila Lambert of St John’s Ambulance Service, the report was sent to North Tyneside Council’s Adult Social Services department, which responded promptly and positively to the findings. In response to the LINK report, North Tyneside Council said they planned a strategic review of respite services for older people in 2011 which will result in procurement of new services and providers. The Council’s Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People also includes a commitment to develop respite services to increase choice for service users and carers.

Johanne Mears, Manager of North Tyneside LINK said “We’re thrilled with the Council’s prompt and cooperative response to this report. It just goes to show the power that the community has when it comes to the services that they use.

Hopefully following the Council’s review, there will be a marked improvement in respite services, which are important to so many people, and that’s down to LINK members raising the issue in the first place.”

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](mailto:link@voda.org.uk) or visit the website [www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk](http://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. You can also download the Respite Care report from this website.

For more information or to become a member of LINK, visit

[www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk](http://www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk), telephone 0191 200 1429 or email

[link@voda.org.uk](mailto:link@voda.org.uk).

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Press contact: for further information or photographs contact Communications

Worker Meg Woollam on 0191 200 8563 or email [meg.woollam@voda.org.uk](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.voda.org.uk).