

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of the LINK is to be completely transparent and accountable to the community that it serves. This strategy aims to outline the various methods that the LINK can use to engage with marginalised groups. It is intended to be used by the LINK as a resource to help identify where we can improve or increase engagement by making sure that we have considered the needs of others and made appropriate changes to allow better involvement.

## 2. Identifying marginalised groups and communities

- 2.1 Having identified some of the more excluded communities in North Tyneside this strategy will be adopted by the LINK as a way of working to ensure that all groups have access to information, resources and support.
- 2.2 The communities are described below:
- Geographic isolation has been one of the more traditional forms of isolation within North Tyneside. Many of the communities in the North and North West of the borough have missed out on opportunities in the past due to their position and poor transport links connecting them to other parts of the borough.
  - Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities are also isolated in North Tyneside. According to the 2001 Census 1.9% (3688) of people in the borough described themselves as non-white, yet groups are still significantly underrepresented. The recent arrival of refugee and asylum communities has brought new opportunities for increased involvement in the network which could potentially lead to a greater mix of community groups. BME communities are largely geographically based, with a significant Bangladeshi community in Whitley Bay and an asylum/refugee population in Wallsend.
  - As well as groups identified by their location and ethnicity, communities of interest may also be isolated throughout the borough. Disability and lesbian/gay communities may be isolated regardless of their location in the borough. People with a disability may find it difficult to access information in an appropriate format, or they may have transport problems. It is difficult to determine the specific needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT). Further understanding on the barriers to participation will be needed in order to target resources directly towards this group; however in identifying the opportunities for greater inclusion



for other groups we aim to have a LINK, which is open to all.

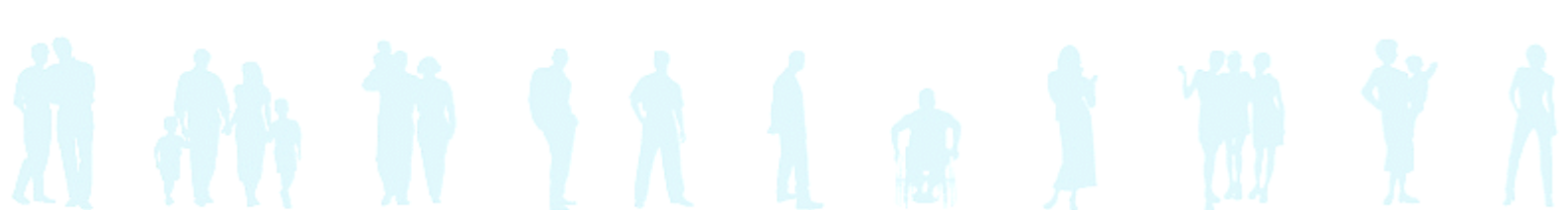
- Carers of children or those with a disability or illness often find it difficult to attend meetings or events due to their caring responsibilities. The LINK will take advice from carer support organisations to ensure that information on the LINK reaches carers in North Tyneside, and will support those carers who wish to be more involved (i.e. providing carers costs where appropriate).
- Those who experience socio-economic disadvantage may find it difficult to take part in LINK activities due to travel, caring and other expenses. LINK will support people to be involved by holding engagement events at different venues around the Borough and helping with transport and caring costs where appropriate.

The LINK recognises that there will always be barriers to inclusion in some form or another. However it must make a positive effort to reduce the impact these barriers may have.

- 2.3 LINK recognises that there are other groups that we may need to access in alternative ways. For example, to engage young people LINK will work with intermediaries, such as youth project workers, at times and in settings appropriate to that group.

### **3. How will the LINK engage with identified marginalised groups and communities?**

- 3.1 The LINK will ensure that there are provisions in place to enable the network to be as inclusive as possible.
- 3.2 Location
- Rotate member events around the borough in accessible venues so that all members are able to access them
  - Reimburse travel expenses for attending LINK Board and Working-Group meetings. An agreed level of travel expenses is included in the LINK Expenses Policy
- 3.3 Development
- The LINK will help identify development needs and work with members of the Board and Working-Groups (See Terms of Reference) so they are supported from the outset
  - LINK will regularly identify gaps in representation and will actively seek to involve groups and individuals that fit into these gaps.
- 3.4 Support
- Provide language and hearing interpreters, information in different languages and in Braille and larger print when required
  - Remove barriers to participation
  - Hold meetings at various times during the day to allow a greater mix of people able to attend



- Pay care costs where appropriate
- 3.5 Communication
- Publish information on LINK activities in accessible formats (newsletter updates, website) as well as agendas and minutes from Board meetings to ensure transparency

3.6 The above does not represent an exhaustive list of what the LINK can do to engage marginalised groups. It aims to highlight the practical steps that can be taken to ensure that these groups are able to access support and information which will help them play a greater role in the LINK. Other steps may be added to the list at a later date as new barriers and strategies arise.

## 4. Review

4.1 The document will be reviewed by March 2011.

**LINK Manager**  
**January 2010**

