



# North Tyneside LINK

## Terms of reference

### August 2011

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 North Tyneside Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a network for individuals and organisations. Membership is open to all. Those who might be particularly interested in becoming members may be individuals who live, or use health and social care services in North Tyneside and organisations that represent people in North Tyneside. (See Code of Conduct policy for all LINK members).

1.2 It exists to give these groups and individuals the opportunity to comment on and contribute to shaping health and adult social care provision in North Tyneside. In particular a LINK exists to:

- Promote and support the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and adult social care services
- Obtain the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local health and adult social care services
- Enable people to monitor and review the commissioning and provision of care services
- Convey people's views to organisations responsible for commissioning, providing, managing and scrutinising local health and adult social care services and recommend how services can be improved

#### 2. What does the LINK do?

2.2 The LINK is a network that contributes to, researches and collects intelligence on health and adult social care issues. Using information fed in to the LINK by its members, the LINK Board can develop projects and initiate investigations into issues and services. Intelligence gathered can then be used to make recommendations for services and can be passed on to the Healthcare Commission or Overview and Scrutiny. This activity will help to shape Health and Adult Social Care services in North Tyneside.

2.3 The LINK was introduced in 2008 to replace the Public Patient Involvement Forums.

2.4 The LINK has statutory powers to:

- Enter certain care and health services to see them at work and collect views from services users (but not the homes of individuals or children's social care services)
- Ask for information, and make reports and recommendations, and get a reply within a set amount of time. The LINK will work within the statutory regulations and within the National Code of Conduct relating to LINK visits to enter and view services.



### 3. **Purpose**

3.1 The purpose of North Tyneside LINK is to:

- Ensure that local communities have a voice to influence health and adult social care provision in North Tyneside.
- To establish a local, community-based network of organisations and individuals, patients, users and carers, and give them a louder voice and more influence in the provision and commissioning of both health and social care services.
- To recognise and tackle health and adult social care inequalities and strive to ensure that good quality health and adult social care is accessible to all.
- To strive to ensure LINK members (individuals and groups) represent as wide a range as possible of interests across the health and adult social care agenda.
- To develop effective partnerships with others to expand our capacity to deliver LINK objectives.
- To ensure that methods of communication are developed which are effective, constructive, clear and concise.
- To work constructively with other LINKs where issues cut across health and adult social care administrative boundaries.
- To use its powers as appropriate to source relevant skills development for its members and the LINK Board and members of sub-groups.
- To, on occasion, commission other organisations to carry out work on behalf of the LINK.

### 4. **Membership**

4.1 The LINK is open to any individual or group with an active interest in health and social care provision, both (or either) as service users or service providers based in or working with/for the residents of North Tyneside.

4.2 Membership is achieved by completing a LINK registration form (available from the LINK Team and on the LINK website).

4.3 As a member of the LINK individuals and organisations are expected to behave in an appropriate manner. This includes respecting the rights of others and abiding by LINK policies and procedures.

### 5. **The Board and board selection**

5.1 The role of the Board will be to:

- Set high level work plan for the LINK
- Agree Project Plans
- Agree variations to project Plans and offer ad-hoc support to project teams
- Sign off final project reports
- Performance management of LINK activities and the Host with respect to the LINK [with the local authority]
- Agree and amend policies and procedures



5.2 Board selection will be through an application and selection process, as detailed in the LINK board recruitment procedure.

## **6. Meetings**

6.1 Agendas and minutes of Board meetings will be published online and will be available on request.

6.2 The Board can call public meetings and meetings of members.

6.3 The quorum for a Board meeting is 50% of the appointed members. The Chair will hold the casting vote.

## **7. Working groups**

7.1 The Board can appoint Working-groups to investigate an issue or conduct a project. Working-groups will be made up of Board members, LINK members and other relevant individuals (service users, experts etc).

## **8. Reporting**

8.1 A report on each project undertaken by the LINK will be produced and shared with, in the first instance, the service it relates to. LINK can expect a response from the service within a set time frame. If the service decides not to respond to recommendations made by the LINK, the LINK can refer the matter to Overview and Scrutiny.

## **9. Accountability and transparency**

9.1 The LINK is committed to transparency at all times and will be held accountable by its members, the community, North Tyneside Council and the Secretary of State.

9.2 Open communication will be key in making the LINK accountable to the community and transparent in its activities. To ensure transparency the LINK Board will publish the following information in an accessible format (i.e. newsletters, on the LINK website):

- Decision making procedures
- Policies and procedures
- Governance structure
- Written statements for decisions and reasons for decisions
- Which services have been investigated, and the outcome of these investigations
- Current areas of work

9.3 The accountability of the LINK will also be developed through:

- The LINK Board having clear roles and responsibilities (see 5.1 above)
- A Register of Interest for LINK members involved in decision making
- A communication plan

9.4 The Host, through the LINK Team, will be held accountable through monitoring by



North Tyneside Council to ensure that the LINK is engaging with the local community, managing LINK funds appropriately and supporting the LINK Board effectively.

## **10. Termination of membership**

- 10.1 The LINK Board shall have the power to terminate the membership of both Individual and Organisational Members, and therefore revoke the registration of any Member of the LINK in the event of conduct that it considers inappropriate and/or that is likely to bring the LINK into disrepute or is contrary to the LINK's interests or policies.
- 10.2 The LINK Board shall have the power to terminate membership of the LINK Board members on the same grounds and according to the same procedure as given for LINK Members, but removal of membership of the Board will not necessarily result in removal of membership of the LINK. Individuals or organisations can terminate their membership at anytime by writing to the LINK Board or the LINK Team.

## **11. Review**

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed by September 2012.

**LINK Manager  
August 2011**

