



# Annual Report 2010/11



**The annual report of  
North Tyneside Local Involvement Network**

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### LINK staff team

Manager	Johanne Mears
Development worker	Alison Chalmers (Hannah Claydon to August 2010)
Communications worker	Meg Woollam (Amy Rudd to August 2010)
Admin assistant	Christine O'Brien

### Host organisation

#### North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency

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Acting Chief Executive: Lisa Gardiner (Julie Duell to February 2011)

# Introduction

Welcome to the annual report for LINK, your local involvement network in North Tyneside.

LINK is a network of local people, groups and organisations that want to make health and social care better for everyone. We do this by talking and listening to local people to find out what they like and dislike about health and social care services.

We then work with the people who plan, run and deliver these services to make sure that people's ideas and experiences are taken into account and that the necessary changes are made.



This report tells you what we have worked on this past year and the results of this work. We are particularly pleased with the work LINK members have been involved with that has resulted in improvements to appointment systems at GP surgeries, see page 14. Also where we supported young people to highlight their experiences in the form of a dvd, see page 16.

This year we continued to build good working relationships with our partner organisations ensuring members have plenty of opportunities to influence the development of services and their planning and commissioning. Members have contributed to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment planning process and to the development of new commissioning arrangements for health and adult social care across North Tyneside. LINK representatives and LINK board members will continue to work on behalf of all LINK members to ensure their voice is heard at the highest level.

North Tyneside was one of the first areas in the country to respond to the plans to 'liberate' our NHS as set out in the Health White Paper. North Tyneside Council led the way by putting shadow arrangements in place for a health and wellbeing board from December 2010.

Your LINK Chair, John Robson, was invited to become vice-chair of this board which is chaired by Mayor Linda Arkley. The board will oversee all health and adult social care services in North Tyneside.



For these developments to succeed it is essential that local people have their say and have their voice heard. If you are not a member of your LINK already I urge you to join and be part of shaping and improving local services in the future. This will be a challenging but exciting time ahead and we hope that we can support you in playing an active role and make a difference.

**Johanne Mears, LINK Manager, and the LINK team**

# Report by John Robson, Chair of North Tyneside LINK



This last financial year has been a very busy period for your LINK. During this time the LINK board has continued to grow and expand. We have welcomed June Davies, Neil Tapster, Bea Groves, Sandra Gray, Melanie Adams, Sirak Hagos, Julia Charlton and Lindsay Perks and said goodbye and thank you to Norma Playle, John Tovell, Fiona Leeming, Steve Forster and Alison Chalmers.

We were particularly pleased to be able to recognise Norma's contribution by nominating her for an Age Takes Centre Stage volunteer award which she collected from Captain Jepperson of the DFDS cruise ship King of Scandinavia. Thank you to all board members for their contribution, it is much appreciated.

Our goodbye to Alison Chalmers as a board member was fortunately short lived as she joined the LINK team as development worker in August after we said goodbye to Hannah Claydon who left us to journey down under to Australia. Amy Rudd, our communications worker, also took a break from work in September to have her first baby and Meg Woollam joined us during this time to ably provide maternity cover. Our thanks go to all of the host team for their support during the year; they have done a fantastic job.

I would also like to thank our LINK representatives, enter and view volunteers and all members who give up their time to become actively involved in shaping and improving our health and social care services in North Tyneside. Their hard work has kept us all better informed and more able to influence local decisions. It has also contributed to the growing positive reputation LINK in North Tyneside has been able to develop.

We hope to continue this in the future, in particular as your representatives on our local health and wellbeing board. As Johanne has mentioned I was honoured to be asked to become vice-chair to this board, I will be joined by June Davies, a fellow LINK board member and Claire Easton as June's deputy.

I hope you enjoy our annual report and feel proud of what LINK members have achieved by working together. It can often seem a long road for change and improvement but this year we feel we have built up some real momentum and we are determined to continue this through next year and the challenges ahead.

**John Robson**  
**Chair of North Tyneside LINK**

# Governance

North Tyneside LINK has individual, group and organisational members, and associated members such as health and social care professionals. LINK is governed by a board interviewed and selected from the membership.

The policies and procedures governing the overall activities of LINK and its members are reviewed annually by the board.

The work of the board and its members is underpinned by the Nolan principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. These principles have been agreed by government as the standards of behaviour for those in paid or voluntary positions in public life. The register of board members' interests is on the LINK website.

## LINK Board

The LINK Board is made up of six individual members, six organisational members and three co-opted members. The board meets every six weeks to agree LINK's priorities, work plan and project budget. It develops and agrees project proposals and decides on the use of LINK inspection powers. The board also interviews authorised LINK representatives and enter and view volunteers.

Organisational members	Individual members	Co-opted members
John Robson (Chair), Coalition for Disabled People	Joan Knox	Hazel Parrack
Ellen Vick (Vice-chair), New Prospects	Eileen Turner	Sirak Hagos
Claire Easton, North Tyneside Carers Centre	June Davies	Lindsay Perks
Sandra Gray, Age UK North Tyneside	Neil Tapster	
Melanie Adams, YMCA North Tyneside	Bea Groves	
	Julia Charlton	

### Board members retiring during 2010/11

Norma Playle, John Tovell, Fiona Leeming, Steve Foster, Alison Chalmers

### Meet some of LINK's new board members



**Melanie Adams** is Head of Health and Wellbeing with YMCA North Tyneside.



**Sirak Hagos** came to the area from Eritrea and works with refugee communities in Tyne and Wear.



**Lindsay Perks** is chair of Older People's Forum North Tyneside and has represented LINK on partnership groups.



**Julia Charlton** is a senior lecturer in nursing at Northumbria University.

## The role of the host organisation and the LINK team

North Tyneside VODA, and the LINK staff team, make sure that LINK is well organised and that we produce high quality work. To do this we:

- advertise and promote North Tyneside LINK;
- make our information accessible so everyone can participate in LINK;
- support and offer advice to the LINK Board and membership;
- manage the data and information held by LINK;
- help build effective partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders;
- maintain the LINK website and produce newsletters and publications; and
- produce this annual report on the activities and expenditure of LINK.

## Involvement with stakeholders

LINK members continued their varied programme of involvement contributing to areas of work with partnership organisations locally, regionally and nationally.

Locally, two LINK members have been involved in the development of the shadow health and wellbeing board which will oversee the commissioning and development of all health and adult social care services in North Tyneside. This board will ensure that health and wellbeing services relate to our local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It will be chaired by the elected Mayor for North Tyneside and John Robson, Chair of North Tyneside LINK, will be vice-chair.



During the last year North Tyneside partnership organisations have been developing a joint commissioning structure which is kept well informed of service user and carer views and experiences. Representatives from LINK have been invited to play a part in developing this structure and helping make sure we have real representation on areas covering mental health, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and older people.

We have been successful in developing relationships with both GP commissioning groups in North Tyneside; CareFirst and Engage Health. From 1 April 2011, CareFirst became a GP Pathfinder and will be sharing their experiences nationally to promote good practice. Their representatives have met with the LINK Board and the LINK team to hear about patients' experiences and local priorities for LINK members. Engage Health are also developing partnerships with LINK and have met with the LINK team manager to discuss how we can move forward.

Developing a closer relationship with our local Care Quality Commission (CQC) team has also been an important part of our work. Local CQC officers have kept LINK informed of their work programme and have actively sought LINK members' opinions and experiences of local services as well as using LINK reports to inform their work.

# LINK representatives

LINK members represent LINK on local partnership boards, raising issues and feeding back to the LINK Board and wider LINK membership. They share issues and decisions with members by writing notes of meetings they attend which are available on our LINK website, [www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk](http://www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk).

The LINK team keep representatives informed through updates following LINK board meetings.

Our representatives in 2010/11 were:

Health and wellbeing board	John Robson (vice-chair) Hazel Parrack
Mental health partnership board	Jane Noble
Learning disability partnership board	Peter Douglas Margaret Parsons
Physical disability partnership board	John Robson Hilda Bell
Older people's partnership board	Joan Knox Norma Playle
North East Ambulance Service LINK group	Pat Bottrill
VONNE health and social care group	Lindsay Perks
Equality, diversity and human rights group	Lindsay Perks Jane Noble
North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership	Joan Knox Norma Playle
North of Tyne medicines management group	Pat Bottrill

## Being a LINK rep - what does it involve?



"I joined the LINK because I wanted to act as a local representative on the Learning Disability Partnership Board. I look at papers and documents on the work of the partnership board, attend their bi-monthly meetings, vote on decisions and raise issues on behalf of LINK, record a summary of the meeting and report matters of concern or interest to the LINK Board.

I enjoy meeting new people who share my interests and concerns. Being a LINK rep has improved my self-confidence and knowledge about how the NHS and social care works in North Tyneside. I have enjoyed training from LINK on being an effective representative.

I get a real sense of satisfaction in providing some oversight and scrutiny of the organisations that work to provide our essential health and social care services in our community."

# Membership of North Tyneside LINK

LINK currently has 255 members. Membership has grown steadily from 89 in March 2009.

Members participate in LINK to different levels, from regular, active involvement to those who keep up-to-date through our newsletters and website.

**LINK members on the LINK board, representing LINK and authorised for enter and view visits:**

**14** individual members

**8** organisational members

**LINK members responding to specific issues or attending LINK events:**

**27** individual members

**18** organisational members

**LINK members who keep informed through newsletters and the LINK website:**

**142** individual members

**46** organisational members

We actively promote LINK as an involvement network for people interested in health and social care. As organisations increasingly work in partnership we find most issues raised by members have elements of both health and social care.

## Who are our members?

We ask individual members for information about their age, gender and ethnic origin, and to tell us if they have a disability. Some members choose not to give all this information. Our membership records show that young people and people from black and minority ethnic communities are under-represented.

68% of individual LINK members are women.

The age distribution of LINK members has remained fairly stable since March 2010. 135 individual members gave information about their age:

8 members are under 18 (6%)

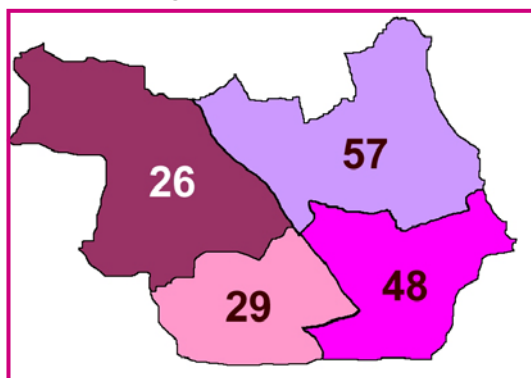
30 members are aged 18 to 44 (22%)

54 members are aged 45 to 64 (40%)

43 members are aged over 65 (32%)

37 members said they had a disability (25% of members who gave this information).

Five individual members identified themselves as being of black or minority ethnic origin.



This map shows how many individual members live in each of the four areas covered by North Tyneside Council area forums. Although 36% of the population live in the North West area of the borough only 16% of LINK members live in that area. Some residents of this area may use Newcastle health services and hospitals, however we recognise the need to promote LINK in the area.

# Involving people and organisations



Our **young people's** project has proved successful in engaging young people on issues of interest to them such as attitudes of staff and making health services more welcoming. Although there has only been a slight increase in young people becoming members of LINK, a wider group of young people have been actively involved in identifying their priorities and getting their message across by producing dvds.

We promote LINK directly to **people from black and minority ethnic communities** by visiting groups and places they attend, for example the community engagement group at the Bangladeshi Centre. The Community Health Development Service at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust keep us informed of forthcoming activities where there are opportunities for LINK to involve people from black and minority ethnic communities and find out more about the issues of importance to them.

We will use the findings of our report of the health and social care needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities in North Tyneside to inform our work to increase involvement with the LINK amongst these communities.

We encourage involvement with LINK through:

**Awareness raising** with local groups and at special events such as North Tyneside Disability Forum, migration support project team, Learning Disability Week event and Healthy Communities awards.

**Information stalls and displays** to attract staff, volunteers and service users at venues such as North Tyneside Council offices, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust headquarters and the Linkskill Centre.

**Single issue events** such as consultation on plans for a new emergency care hospital, the joint strategic needs assessment, HealthWatch and 'Healthy lives, healthy people' public health proposals.

**Working jointly** with other organisations to get people's views on local plans such as relocation of acute mental health services.

**Projects** offering opportunities for involvement such as the young people's dvd, medicines management and personalisation of social care, see page 16.

**'Join LINK'** on-line form on our website and links from related sites such as North Tyneside Council website, local NHS websites, 'my signpost' learning disability resource website and the do-it volunteer website.

**Training** for LINK members. We held six **board development sessions** and two **sessions for LINK representatives** to support members in their role.

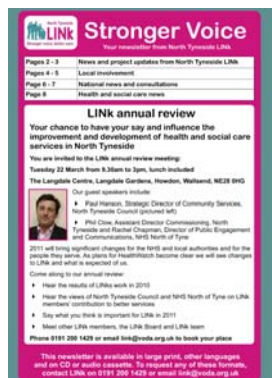
Newcastle and North Tyneside Community Health NHS led **diversity training** for LINK members focusing on challenging stereotypes.

**Enter and view** representatives attended six training sessions before carrying out their first visits and a further training session in preparation for visits to care homes.

# Keeping people informed

LINK uses electronic, printed and face-to-face communication to keep members, organisations and the public informed, to promote LINK activities and achievements and to attract new members.

## LINK newsletters



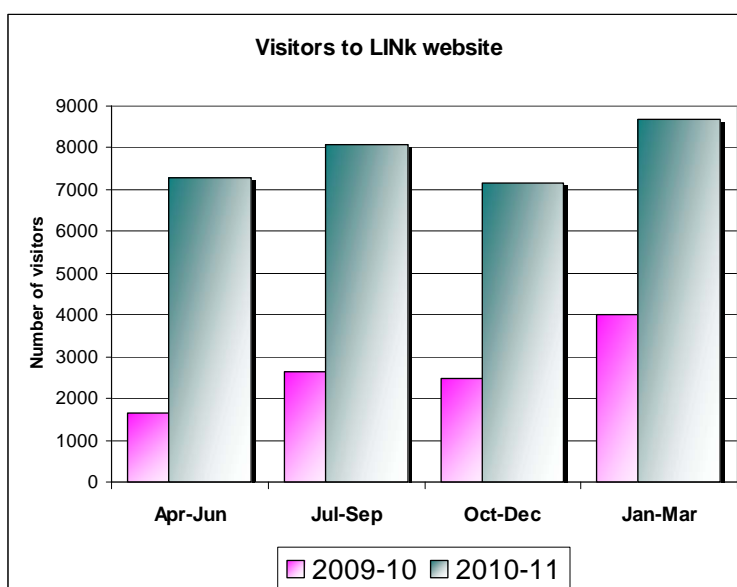
This year, we issued six editions of our LINK newsletter, **Stronger Voice**, by post to all LINK members. The newsletter is also available to download from the LINK website. We include information about forthcoming events, LINK projects and activities, board decisions and feedback from LINK representatives. We also include local health and social care news and national consultations.

We issue an **e-newsletter** to all members on alternate months to Stronger Voice.

## Website

Our LINK website gives information about our projects and events and local and national health and social care news of interest to LINK members. All our board papers, LINK reports and other publications are available to download from our website.

The average monthly website visitors increased from 1378 in 2009/10 to 2958 in 2010/11, rising to 4186 in March 2011.



## Media

We issue news releases about events and current issues such as the findings of LINK's respite services report which were published in the local paper, News Guardian. We promote LINK activities through newsletters and e-bulletins produced by local groups and statutory organisations. In March 2011, North Tyneside Council included a full page feature in their residents' magazine about LINK and enter and view.

## Advertising and promotion

We place advertisements telling people about LINK and how to join, in local publications such as theatre and concert programmes, WRVS diary, arthritis calendar and breast screening cards. We produce publicity flyers for events and distribute them across North Tyneside.

We continually look for new opportunities to promote LINK. For example, this year we used digital screens at North Tyneside General Hospital and in community venues, and community noticeboards on the Tyne and Wear Metro.

# Making a difference

## Enter and view

This year, ten LINK members were selected, trained and cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau and are now authorised representatives for enter and view:

Jean Drury	Mary Ayre	Maureen Mullen	Norma Brunton
Neil Tapster	Daphne Hall	Molly Herridge	John Robson
Susan Dawson	Eileen Turner		

These representatives can enter and view premises providing health and adult social care services within North Tyneside to observe and report on services and service delivery. They observe and assess the nature and quality of services, hear the views of people using those services and gather information from staff, service users and carers. If we already have information about the services, our volunteers find out if anything has changed or improved.



Our representatives attended six training sessions before carrying out their first visits and a further training session in preparation for visits to care homes.

## Enter and view visits to North Tyneside General Hospital

From November 2010 to January 2011 six enter and view volunteers visited North Tyneside General Hospital:

- Ward 4 - eighteen patients were spoken to over four visits.
- Ward 18 - eleven patients were spoken to over three visits.
- Ward 14 - six patients and three carers were spoken to over two visits.
- Ward 23 - fourteen patients were spoken to over two visits.

These visits were arranged in advance with the Director of Nursing and ward managers. Feedback from the visits is included in the LINK report on patient experience at North Tyneside General Hospital, see page 12.

## Enter and view visits to care homes

LINK has built up a good working relationship with the contracts team for adult social care services at the council. This year, our enter and view volunteers will be visiting care homes in North Tyneside to look at and report on the quality of care they provide. These reports will be part of the process that informs the council on the grading of the homes.

Training and support for enter and view volunteers is provided by the council and the LINK team. Jemma Hurrell, Business Relationship Officer said:

“I loved the training day, it has really inspired me and I think we can make this a fantastic project”.

We advertised for more volunteers through the LINK website, council residents' magazine and do-it volunteering website in April 2011.

# Improving hospital services

## Patient experience at North Tyneside General Hospital



LINK members and Age UK raised concerns about patients' experience at North Tyneside General Hospital. The LINK board agreed our enter and view volunteers should visit the hospital wards where concerns had been raised to speak to patients, carers and staff.

We agreed a partnership approach with the Director of Nursing. Our enter and view volunteers visited four wards and spoke to 52 patients and carers.

Through our newsletter, posters, website and member organisations, we asked people to share their recent hospital experiences as a patient or carer:

- Three people attended a meeting for carers of people with dementia.
- Five people gave one-to-one interviews.
- Two carers and one patient completed a written survey.
- Two carers and four patients wrote to us about their experiences.

We also looked at information from North of Tyne PALS and the hospital trust complaints data for the previous six months.

### What did we find?

The majority of patients and carers were satisfied with the care at North Tyneside General Hospital and full of praise for staff. However, it was felt that the staff were very busy and sometimes communication with patients and carers was not as good as it could be and that basic non-medical care was sometimes overlooked.

### What next?

We shared our findings and recommendations with the hospital managers and the LINK board. We met with Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of Northumbria NHS Trust to discuss the report. We received a written response from the NHS trust 46 working days after the report was published.

## Hospital discharge project update

Patient information is being improved following LINK's report last year on hospital discharge arrangements:

- North Tyneside Council produced a leaflet saying how to contact the social work team which was distributed to all wards in North Tyneside General Hospital.
- A LINK volunteer has been working on a directory of community organisations that could be useful on discharge. This will be available on all wards at North Tyneside General Hospital.

## Consultation on emergency care services and improvements to hospital services

Following LINK's consultation on urgent care proposals in March 2010 we arranged an event in November 2010 for LINK members and the public in partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.



Birju Rana, Deputy Director for Surgery and Elective Care, told members about plans for a new emergency care hospital. LINK members gave their views on how North Tyneside General Hospital could be improved for patients and visitors when emergency care services move to the new hospital.

LINK members were concerned that the public may think that budget savings would prevent development of the emergency care hospital. Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust responded positively to members' request for more regular news updates and wider distribution of information and engagement opportunities.

Our LINK event report: An audience with Northumbria Healthcare – working together to deliver world class care in North Tyneside and Northumbria, gives a full report of the findings and recommendations of the consultation.

## Relocation of acute adult mental health services

Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust plan to move adult acute mental health services from Ward 21 at North Tyneside General Hospital to St George's Park, Morpeth. LINK publicised consultation events for mental health service users and carers and collated responses to the NHS Trust and North Tyneside health and wellbeing sub-committee.

LINK members raised concerns about access to St George's Park as there are no direct buses between North Tyneside and Morpeth. They said St George's Park still had an institutional feel and also raised questions about support after discharge and day support. Service users and carers were invited to an open day at St George's Park to see the improved facilities. At the time of publication of the annual report we were waiting to hear the next steps from the NHS trust.

## NHS quality accounts

Quality accounts for local NHS trusts are placed on the LINK website and publicised through the LINK newsletter. Members are asked to send their comments to the LINK team who draw together the LINK response.

LINK members gave their comments on 2010 quality accounts for:

- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust
- North East Ambulance Service

The LINK responses to NHS quality accounts are available on our website.

# Making a difference

## Access to GP surgeries

LINK members wanted to find out if local people could fairly and easily access GP services. We asked for people's views through surveys of children's centres, LINK members and young people. We talked to people at LINK events and held a coffee morning for people with learning disabilities.

### What did we find out?

Feedback from the postal survey was generally positive with many people saying how easy it was to access their GP and how helpful they found staff.

Concerns were raised about four of the 29 practices in North Tyneside:

- Difficult to get an appointment with patient's own GP.
- Being prescribed medication without thorough medical examination.
- Waiting times.
- Difficulty making same day appointments due to phone-in system.
- Unhappy reception staff.

### How did GP practices improve?

Four surgeries were asked to respond to concerns raised in the LINK survey. Three responded within 20 working days and one replied following a reminder:

- One surgery restructured its appointment system to free up more 'on the day' appointments.
- One surgery was introducing a 'do not attend' policy which they hoped would help improve their overall appointment system.
- One surgery trained receptionists to be more aware of patient experience.
- One surgery was hoping to help patients access their on-line prescription ordering service to reduce waiting time at reception.

## Generic medicines

North Tyneside Patient's Voice collected anecdotal evidence about the same medication being dispensed in different formats and the difficulties this could create for patients. LINK looked at the reasons why the same drugs had different packaging, colours and names. NHS North of Tyne invited LINK representatives from North Tyneside, Newcastle and Northumberland to meet with pharmacy services. Many of the issues raised about generic medicines are national issues which limits the influence our LINK can have in bringing about change.

### Making a difference for patients



The North of Tyne LINKs now meet regularly with representatives of the pharmacy services to discuss patient concerns in medicine management. The group also look at patient information leaflets before publication. For example they revised a leaflet about changes to prescribing from a patient perspective.

## Personalisation

Adult social care services in North Tyneside are moving to a new system that focuses on the importance of individuals making their own decisions about their own care.

We are supporting third sector providers, including the Learning Disabilities Federation, Age UK, North Tyneside Carers' Centre and the Richmond Fellowship, to meet regularly and discuss personalisation issues. The group said there was a lack of information for service users and carers about personalisation, individual budgets and direct payments.

Representatives from the council and A4E (who provide direct payments support) join our meetings with third sector providers to get involved in the discussion and provide up-to-date information. North Tyneside Council representative, Scott Woodhouse, updated the LINK board and third sector group in January 2011 on the implementation of personalisation and the resource allocation system.



### What next?

We have commissioned an independent researcher to investigate and report on what information is needed by service users, carers and providers and how it should be presented to support the implementation of personalisation .

The third sector personalisation group continues to meet as members see it as a valuable opportunity to discuss issues with other providers and raise issues with council staff.

## Treating common mental health problems in North Tyneside

Patients and carers expressed concerns to LINK about the availability and success of low-level and preventable mental health services in North Tyneside. They reported long waiting times to receive help for common mental health problems like depression and anxiety. We commissioned an investigation into the level of demand for these services and the range of services available in the area.

Our report recommended the roll-out of innovative psychological therapies, increased patient choice, better training for GPs on referring patients and better communication between health professionals and with patients.

The development of 'Improving access to psychological therapies' (IAPT) was given priority by the mental health partnership board in response to this report .

NHS North of Tyne representatives gave a detailed update on progress and highlighted new services in North Tyneside at the LINK annual review in March 2011. Their report is available on our LINK website.

## Involving young people

We asked young people what was important to them in our LINK survey in 2009. We sent the survey to secondary schools, TyneMet College, North Tyneside Disability Forum, Barnado's and North Tyneside Council's Disability Network. To find out more, we worked with young people interested in health and social care to organise fun activities and workshops and they voted on the issues most important to them.

"Many health care professionals treat you as just another patient and not as an individual."

Their top issues were:

- Staff attitudes to young people
- Mental health.

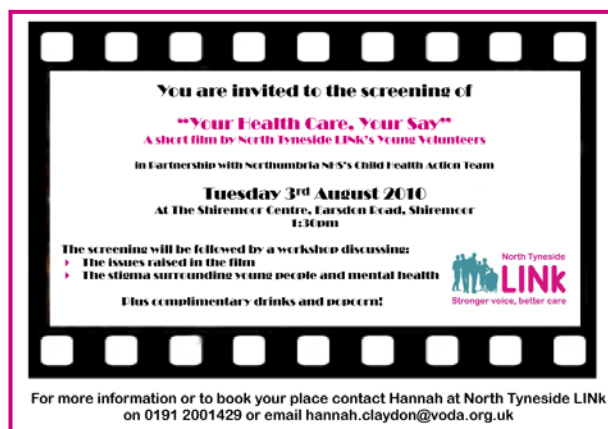
"Clinics should be open more appropriate times"

"I'd like to be respected more!"

"Doctors should talk to the young person who they are treating, not the adult accompanying them."

## Your health care, your say

We worked with the young people and the Community Health Action Team (CHAT) in 2010 to produce a short film of their experiences of health care services. This was done through role plays and interviews with young people. The film 'Your health, your say' was screened to health professionals and others involved in youth participation and involvement including the mental health partnership board and NHS North of Tyne's 'You're welcome' committee.



LINK's young volunteers took this opportunity to show staff and other young people the film they had created and to show a second film developed by a volunteer about self harm.

"Thanks for the copy of the dvd, which I think is great. It would be great if LINK continued the work on You're Welcome in some of the ways we discussed."

Mandy Cheetham, Joint You're Welcome Project Lead.

National Children's Bureau is researching how children and young people can be more involved with LINKs and is using our engagement with young people as an example of good practice to share nationally with other LINKs.

## What next?

- 'Your health, your say' dvd will be used for training health and social care professionals and will be publicised through the workforce collaborative.
- We are working with the 'You're welcome' project to involve more young people in health and care services.
- We are working with young carers to produce a dvd for young people about de-stigmatising mental health.

## Experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people

LINK commissioned this research as we felt lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people may be reluctant to come forward to give their opinions, even on important issues like health and social care. Those we spoke with felt there was a lack of support and they did not know of any established groups operating in the borough to offer informal support.

### **Commitment to change** in response to reports commissioned by LINK:

- Improved engagement with statutory services.
- North Tyneside Council to work towards providing space for meetings of minority groups.
- LINK members to work on production of an e-magazine for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.



## Quality and availability of respite care services



Following the LINK report on respite services in North Tyneside the council said they would begin reviewing these services in February 2011. In response to our request for an update in March 2011 they said they were not planning a full review as they are already aware of the gaps in services available.

The council recognises that services for older people outside the home are limited to Dorset House or a short break at a care home. People are not offered the opportunity to have a shared break and there is a lack of respite with nursing care.

The older people's joint commissioning strategy called for development of respite services by:

- Reviewing the respite services provided by St Anne's.
- Developing a network of alternative respite away from the home.
- Providing support systems to help people access this network.
- Pooling primary care trust and local authority carers' budgets to commission new services.

### **Better respite services for the future**

- North Tyneside Council are working with providers to look at alternatives to existing respite services and will keep LINK informed of progress.
- Carers' budgets will be looked at as part of the new commissioning arrangements.
- North Tyneside Council has made some changes to the carers' contract so an element of support can be delivered in a person's own home.
- Respite at St Anne's is no longer commissioned by the council but people can continue to use the service by using their direct payments.

# Contributing to local and national plans

LINK members contribute to responses to local and national consultations at LINK events and by giving their views and comments direct to the LINK team. We keep them informed of new consultations and the outcome of closed consultations through LINK newsletters and the website. We also promote consultation events and surveys led by statutory and community organisations.

## Liberating the NHS

Members were informed of the White Paper, Liberating the NHS, through the LINK newsletters and website. Their comments were used to send a LINK response to the proposals on:

- Greater choice and control; and
- An information revolution.

## HealthWatch consultation



Members heard government proposals to set up local HealthWatch and HealthWatch England at our LINK event in September 2010. Their views were used to send a LINK response to the Department of Health. Members are kept up-to-date with plans for HealthWatch through our newsletters and website and will continue their involvement in the transition to HealthWatch over the next year.

## Healthy lives, healthy people consultation

Members had their say on government plans for tackling public health challenges at our LINK event in February 2011. Their views were used to send a LINK response to the Department of Health.

## LINK members responded to national consultation on:

- Transparency in outcomes: A framework for adult social care.
- Disability Living Allowance reform.
- Cancer drugs fund.
- NHS delivery system for equality and diversity.

## Adult social care restructuring proposals

LINK responded to North Tyneside Council plans to restructure adult social care services to enable people to take greater control over their lives.

Members supported the underlying principles for the proposed structural changes:

- to develop personalisation to give people greater control of their lives and the social care services they receive; and
- to strengthen arrangements for safeguarding adults.

Members raised concerns about how the new arrangements would support partnership working with public health and health care and asked to be involved in further discussions.

## North Tyneside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LINK members met in May and September 2010 to give their views on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for North Tyneside.



Dr Fu Meng Khaw, Acting Director of Public Health for Newcastle and North Tyneside gave an overview of the JSNA and an update on ongoing developments including the JSNA website, topic summaries, annual refresh and engagement plan.

Members contributed to decisions about future priorities for health and wellbeing at the events and by responding to our LINK survey.

They told us what was important to them:

- Cancer prevention, screening and treatment was given top priority.
- Management of coronary heart disease and strokes, dementia and urgent care services, severe mental illness, carers, falls in older people, sensory impairment and physical impairment were high priority issues.

Issues of less importance to LINK members included migrant health, offenders, breastfeeding and transition from teenage to adulthood.

## Pharmaceutical needs assessment

LINK responded to North Tyneside pharmaceutical needs assessment in November 2010. We also publicise applications to change local pharmacy services. Members can respond to these applications through LINK.

## Requests for information

North Tyneside LINK has not needed to make any official requests for information in the period from April 2010 to March 2011. We have developed good working relationships with health and adult social care commissioners, and the statutory providers of health and social care services. This has enabled LINK members to work in partnership with these organisations, resulting in information being given to members without resorting to statutory powers. Information provided by these organisations included financial information, management arrangements, complaints data and service user feedback. This has made it possible for LINK members to produce well informed reports to support their recommendations.

## Referrals to Overview and Scrutiny

Similarly, LINK has been able to work in partnership with our local Overview and Scrutiny Committee for health and social care. We have shared work plans and resulting reports to avoid duplication of effort and plan ahead effectively. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a standing agenda item for LINK to update them on our work and if necessary to refer any unresolved issues to them for further investigation.

# LINK annual review

LINK members met in June 2010 and March 2011 for an update on progress and outcomes of LINK projects and to contribute through workshops to LINK's future plans. This annual report shows how LINK tackled some of these issues and how LINK is making a difference to health and social care services in North Tyneside.

“Although I was aware of the work that had been going on throughout the year I realised today how much hard work had been put in and how many successes had been achieved.”

“Workshops were excellent, stimulating and thought provoking - most worthwhile.”

## Taking a look at LINK, June 2010

Members talked about the issues they felt should be given priority by LINK:

- personalisation of social care
- care homes
- care at home
- young people's mental health
- children's health
- prevention and diagnosis of long-term conditions
- adults with autism
- generic medicines
- more NHS chiropodists
- out of hours transport to hospitals
- alcohol mis-use
- education of health professionals
- involvement of people from black and minority ethnic communities

## LINK annual review, March 2011



Members heard how LINK had influenced health and social care services from representatives of North Tyneside Council and NHS North of Tyne.

Paul Hanson, North Tyneside Council, said he felt that there was a good relationship between LINK and the council. He talked about LINK's achievements in improving services and the plans for enter and view volunteers to work with the council as Independent Observers in care homes.

Rachel Chapman and Phil Clow from NHS North of Tyne shared information on day-to-day involvement with LINK such as the medicines management meetings involving all three North of Tyne LINKs. They told members how they were implementing the recommendations of LINK's report on Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.



Members talked in the annual review workshops about LINK's priorities for the coming year. Personalisation and closer working with GP commissioning groups and GP forums were identified as priorities for LINK by all the workshops.



Other issues raised included:

- Development of North Tyneside General Hospital and the Emergency Care Hospital
- Delays in occupational therapy assessments
- Preventative services, long-term conditions, podiatry and ageism in health care

Members hope the voice of the user and carer are not lost in all the changes to health and social care. They stressed the need to make sure LINK has a voice on the new partnership boards.

## Looking ahead to the next 12 months

The future for LINK members is to continue to grow and develop to offer more opportunities for involvement. The next year will be challenging in terms of the financial resources available for LINK, and for the services that LINK members are involved with. However, there will still be a firm commitment to involve service users, their care partners and the wider community in how we can improve local health and adult social care services.

Although members will need to stay focused on the main objective of involvement in decisions to improve and develop services, the LINK team will also need to be active in supporting members to contribute towards the local responses to the proposed changes to our health and social care system.

A key issue next year will be the transition of LINK to local HealthWatch. We will continue to work in partnership with local health and adult social care commissioners and service providers to ensure that members continue to have opportunities to influence these developments so that local HealthWatch reflects the needs of our community.

The LINK team will continue to develop strong relationships with both of the GP commissioning groups in North Tyneside and our fellow members of the health and wellbeing board.

Our priorities for 2011/12 will also include:

- working with young people, focusing on reducing the stigma attached to mental health difficulties;
- involving members in making recommendations for the information they need to understand and rise to the challenge of having a personal budget;
- gathering patient views on the re-ablement service;
- finding out if the home care service has met service user expectations;
- supporting the implementation of the strategy to improve the lives of adults with autistic spectrum conditions; and
- providing better opportunities for black and ethnic minority communities to be involved in all our activities.

# LINK reports published in 2010/11

LINK published eight commissioned reports, four LINK members' reports and seven event reports in 2010/11. You can download all our reports from the LINK website or contact LINK for a printed copy.

## LINK members' reports:

- Patient experience at North Tyneside General Hospital
- Young people's project report
- Access to GP surgeries
- Hospital discharge project update

## Commissioned reports:

- Health and social care needs of black and minority ethnic communities
- The way ahead: An investigation into the experience of transition from child to adult services in North Tyneside
- Investigation into the quality of home care services in North Tyneside
- Coming out, coming together: Investigation into the health and social care experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in North Tyneside
- Transgendered people: Investigation into the experiences of transgendered people in accessing health and social care in North Tyneside
- Treating common mental health problems in North Tyneside
- Quality and availability of respite care services in North Tyneside
- Health and social care needs of very elderly people

## LINK event reports:

- 'Healthy lives, healthy people' public health consultation
- An audience with Northumbria Healthcare – working together to deliver world class care in North Tyneside and Northumbria
- North Tyneside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (May 2010 event)
- North Tyneside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment refresh (Sept 2010)
- HealthWatch consultation
- Taking a look at LINK (June 2010)
- LINK annual review (March 2011)

LINK has commissioned a report on the information needed by service users, carers and providers and how it should be presented to support the implementation of personalisation. This report will be published in 2011/12.

## Responses to LINK reports

North Tyneside Council, North Tyneside Primary Care Trust and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust responded in writing to relevant findings and recommendations of LINK reports within 20 working days in most instances.

- North Tyneside Council responded to the report on respite services in 22 working days.
- North Tyneside Council responded to the report on treating common mental health problems in 22 working days.
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust responded to the report on patient experience at North Tyneside General Hospital in 46 working days.

# Finance

The LINK budget is divided into three areas: host costs, staffing costs for the LINK team and costs to support LINK membership involvement, recruitment and awareness raising. The host costs and staff costs were agreed in contract with North Tyneside Council. LINK members and the LINK Board on their behalf, are responsible for approving the LINK membership costs.

## LINK financial return for 2010/11

- **£134,000** received by North Tyneside Council from Department of Health
- **£120,060** received by VODA from North Tyneside Council to host LINK
- **£33,741** used by LINK to fund membership activity (£21,759 from North Tyneside Council+ £11,982 carried forward)

Budget head	Budget 2010/11	Actual cost 2010/11	Variance
Office	9,421	9,421	0
Administration	8,218	8,218	0
<b>Host costs</b>	<b>17,639</b>	<b>17,639</b>	<b>0</b>
Salaries	76,402	71,600	4,802
Staff training	1,600	690	910
Recruitment	1,000	1,963	-963
Staff travel	2,200	1,000	1,200
<b>Staff costs</b>	<b>81,202</b>	<b>75,253</b>	<b>5,949</b>
Governance training	2,000	2,000	0
Meetings	2,000	2,000	0
Marketing	6,500	5,734	766
Website	500	350	150
Database	500	0	500
Projects	22,241	11,740	10,501
<b>LINK costs</b>	<b>33,741</b>	<b>21,824</b>	<b>11,917</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,582</b>	<b>114,716</b>	<b>17,866</b>

## LINK budget 2011/12

- **£134,000** received by North Tyneside Council from Department of Health
- **£100,000** received by VODA from North Tyneside Council to host LINK
- **£22,482** to be used by LINK to fund membership activity (£4,615 from North Tyneside Council + £17,866 carried forward)

Budget head	Budget	Budget head	Budget
Office	9,421	Governance training	2,000
Administration	8,218	Meetings	3,000
<b>Host costs</b>	<b>17,639</b>	Marketing	5,000
Salaries	74,146	Website	500
Staff training	1,600	Database	500
Staff travel	2,000	Projects	11,481
<b>Staff costs</b>	<b>77,746</b>	<b>LINK costs</b>	<b>22,481</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>117,866</b>

# Thanks and acknowledgements

North Tyneside LINK would like to thank the following people and organisations:

- The LINK Board
- Third sector providers personalisation working group
- Young people's working group
- LINK representatives
- LINK volunteers

## Partnership organisations:

- Care Quality Commission
- GP Consortia
- Director of Public Health
- North Tyneside Council
- NHS North of Tyne
- North Tyneside Primary Care Trust
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- North East Ambulance Service
- Democratic Support Officer (Overview and Scrutiny, Health and Wellbeing, North Tyneside Council)

## Groups LINK has worked with:

- North Tyneside Community and Health Care Forum (CHCF)
- North Tyneside Disabilities Forum
- North Tyneside Youth Council
- Youth Action Team, VODA
- North Tyneside Carers Centre
- North Tyneside Age UK
- North Tyneside Alzheimer's Society
- Older People's Forum North Tyneside
- Learning Disabilities Federation
- Skills for People
- YMCA North Tyneside

## Consultants LINK has worked with:

- Continuum
- Keith Metcalf
- Diane and Alan Varty
- Alan Porter
- Anne McNulty
- Annette McGlade, Learning Disabilities Federation
- Bea Groves

## Companies LINK has worked with:

- Prontaprint
- Braudio
- Priory Catering
- News Guardian
- Wallsend People's Centre



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