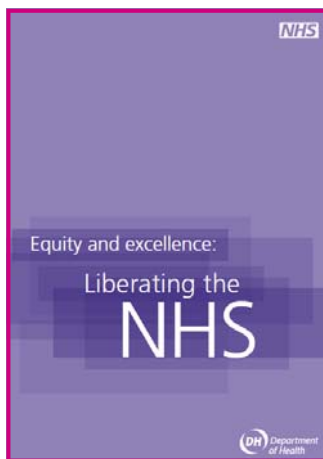


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LINKs to Become HealthWatch: Come Along to the Consultation Event



On 12 July 2010, the Government published a Health White Paper entitled *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*. Among a number of proposed changes for the NHS and health care (which are summarised on page 2), the paper includes the Government's proposals for the future of LINKs. They have announced plans to set up a national independent champion for health and social care consumers called HealthWatch England, which will be an independent part of the Care Quality Commission. LINKs will become local HealthWatch organisations.

The Government plans to build on the current role of LINKs by turning them into a 'citizens advice bureau' for health and social care, with new duties to include providing complaints and advocacy services and supporting individuals to exercise choice. A HealthWatch member will also sit on the new Health and Wellbeing boards so the community has a say in local decisions.

The Department of Health is currently consulting on **how** HealthWatch should work to achieve these aims. In order to submit a collective response from members, we are holding a consultation event on **Thursday 9 September** at the Oxford Centre, Longbenton, between 10am and 1.30pm (with lunch included). This will be a chance to hear more about the new proposals and to answer the questions set out in the official consultation document, which can be downloaded from LINK's website at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk or a hard copy requested from the team. **For this, and to book your place at the event telephone 0191 200 1429 or email link@voda.org.uk.**

This newsletter is available in large print, other languages and on CD or audio cassette. To request any of these formats, contact LINK on 0191 200 1429 or email link@voda.org.uk

Government Health White Paper: Opportunities for Consultation

Background

As described on the front page, the Government's Health White Paper, Equality and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, was published in July of 2010. This sets out the vision for the future of the NHS, rooted in the coalition's core beliefs of freedom, fairness and responsibility. It also includes implications for the future of LINks and other health-related bodies. You can download the full document from www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/white-paper.html.

Summary

Some of the key proposals in the document are summarised below:

- ▶ Patients will be at the heart of the NHS, through an information revolution and greater choice and control. This includes patients having increased control over their own care records; having the choice of any provider, GP practice and treatment; and strengthening the collective voice of patients and the public through the implementation of HealthWatch (see front page).
- ▶ All NHS Trusts will become or be part of a Foundation Trust.
- ▶ The NHS will be held to account against evidence-based outcome measures.
- ▶ Quality standards will inform the commissioning of all NHS care and payment schemes. Inspection will be against essential quality standards.
- ▶ The Government will devolve power and responsibility for commissioning services to healthcare professionals closest to patients: GPs and their practice teams working in consortia.
- ▶ Strengthened role of the Care Quality Commission.
- ▶ PCT responsibilities for local health improvement will transfer to local authorities.
- ▶ The Government will reduce NHS management costs by more than 45% over the next four years, freeing up further resources for frontline care.

Get Involved: Consultations Now Open

The Department of Health is now consulting on how best to implement the following four elements of the Paper. Details and links to all of these consultations can be found at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/white-paper.html.

- ▶ **Commissioning for patients:** Sets out proposals for putting local consortia of GP practices in charge of commissioning services to best meet the needs of local people, supported by an independent NHS Commissioning Board.
- ▶ **Increasing democratic legitimacy in health:** It is proposed that this will be achieved through local authorities: i) being given a stronger role in supporting patient choice and ensuring effective local voice; ii) taking on local public health improvement functions, and iii) promoting more effective NHS, social care and public health commissioning arrangements.

- ▶ **Regulating health care providers:** This paper outlines proposals on foundation trusts and the establishment of Monitor as an independent economic regulator for health and adult social care. It seeks views on specific consultation questions.
- ▶ **Transparency in outcomes - a framework for the NHS:** The White Paper sets out how the Secretary of State for Health will hold the NHS Commissioning Board to account for delivering better health outcomes through a national NHS Outcomes Framework. This consultation and engagement process looks at how the Department should develop the NHS Outcomes Framework.

The closing date for all of the above consultations is **Monday 11 October**.

You can read more on each and submit your comments by visiting www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations or respond directly by emailing NHSWhitePaper@dh.gsi.gov.uk or writing to: White Paper team, Room 601, Department of Health, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS.

VONNE Hosts Regional Consultation Event

VONNE (Voluntary Organisations Network North East) is hosting a consultation event on **Wednesday 22 September**, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Regional Voices. Taking place at Newcastle Civic Centre between 10.30am and 3.30pm, the event will be an opportunity for third sector organisations to speak directly to those leading on each of the four consultations already released (see above). For more information and to book your place visit www.vonne.org.uk or telephone 0191 233 2000.

Raising your issues: If you have issues you would like to raise in any of these consultations, and/or your organisation is submitting a response to the consultations, you can do so via VONNE who are making a submission from the North East Health and Social Care Forum and are asking for comments. Send your comments and queries to: Jo Whaley, Policy Officer, VONNE, 9th Floor, Cale Cross, 156 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SU.

LINK Holds Two JSNA Meetings

As part of our ongoing commitment to involving LINK members in the refresh of North Tyneside's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), LINK is organising two meetings in conjunction with North Tyneside PCT. The purpose of the meetings will be to review the JSNA topic summaries and consult with LINK members on how to prioritise these. Director of Public Health Dr Fu Meng Khaw will be in attendance to introduce the themes. Topics for consideration include the prevention of long-term conditions, mental and emotional wellbeing and personalisation. The meetings take place on:

- ▶ **Friday 24 September at the Oxford Centre, Longbenton** and
- ▶ **Wednesday 6 October at The Parks Leisure Centre, North Shields**

Both meetings run between 10am and 1.30pm, with lunch included. To book your place contact the LINK team on 0191 200 1429 or email link@voda.org.uk.

Staff and Board Changes at LINK



We are delighted to welcome Alison Chalmers (left) to the host team of North Tyneside LINK. Alison took over from Hannah Claydon as Development Worker early in August, and simultaneously resigns from LINK's Board.

A local North Tyneside resident, Alison has spent the past nine years working as Health Literacy Officer at the Learning Disabilities Federation. She has a background in communication and consultation with hard to reach groups.

Of her new post, Alison said "I am looking forward to helping support local people have their say on the health and social care issues that are important to them."

You can contact Alison on 0191 200 1429 or email alison.chalmers@voda.org.uk.



This month sees Amy Rudd take on a new role as she goes off on maternity leave. We wish Amy all the best. Meg Woollam (pictured left) is taking over as Communications Worker whilst Amy is away. Meg has worked in social care and corporate communications in the public sector for many years and is looking forward to new experiences in her post with LINK. Contact Meg on 0191 200 1429 or email meg.woollam@voda.org.uk.

There is currently a vacancy for the following position on LINK's Board:

- ▶ One organisational Board member

If you are interested in learning more about this position, contact LINK Manager Johanne Mears on 0191 200 1429 or email johanne.mears@voda.org.uk.

LINK Representatives

LINK has been working closely with our representatives to ensure they can get the most out of their role. We have developed two new documents: LINK Guidance for Boards, which sets out how boards can fully involve our reps (this has been sent out to every board that a LINK rep sits on and has already been signed by the Physical Disabilities Partnership Board) and LINK Representative's Agreement, which sets out LINK's expectations for its reps and what they, in turn, can expect from LINK in terms of information and support.

Both documents can be downloaded from LINK's website:

www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/representing-link.html, where you can also find notes from Board Meetings and details of current vacancies.

Current Vacancy: We currently have a vacancy for a LINK Representative on the Mental Health Partnership Board. If you are interested in learning more about this position, contact LINK Manager Johanne Mears on 0191 200 1429 or email johanne.mears@voda.org.uk.

Personalisation

The Third Sector Reference Group is meeting in September with Sheila Watson from North Tyneside Council. We will discuss the impact of personalisation on third sector providers and the emerging new market. We will meet again later in the year to look at evaluation and monitoring of personal budgets.

Hospital Discharge

The final report on this project is now complete and will be published in September following approval from LINK's board. The patients and carers' database, which will include details of community-based services that may be of use to patients who have recently been discharged from hospital, their families and carers, will be completed soon after, so watch this space for more information.

Access to GPs



We were very pleased to receive over 200 responses to our Access to GPs survey conducted in May and June. We have analysed the results and found that only four surgeries in the borough were rated by some people as not very easy to access. We have sent this information to the surgeries and the PCT, and are awaiting responses.

These responses will be presented to LINK's Board in September to decide if any further action is needed. A full report will also be made available at that time. For more information on this project contact Alison Chalmers on 0191 200 1429 or email alison.chalmers@voda.org.uk.

All Ten Enter and View Volunteers Recruited

We are pleased to let you know the names of all ten successful Enter and View volunteers, who will soon be undertaking a variety of tasks for LINK:

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

The volunteers have now undertaken the appropriate training with LINK - you can find out more about the Enter and View duties they will be undertaking at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/enter_and_view.

Special Report: Film Screening Marks the Culmination of LINK's Young People's Project



August saw the culmination of LINK's young people's project, with a screening of two films produced by young volunteers in conjunction with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Child Health Action Team (CHAT).

Through role plays and interviews, *Your Health Care, Your Say* explores issues including mental health, staff attitudes and the way health professionals present themselves to young people. LINK volunteer Emma Ramshaw also produced a short animation exploring the issue of self-harm. Both films were screened to specially invited professionals, including the Integrated Services Development Manager for Children & Families Commissioning for North of Tyne NHS and the Service Development Officer for Mental Health at North Tyneside Council. A number of other staff from youth participation and community involvement teams from the council and the PCT were also in attendance. Following the screenings, discussions were held around how services could be improved to make them more accessible to young people, and about the stigma attached to self harm.

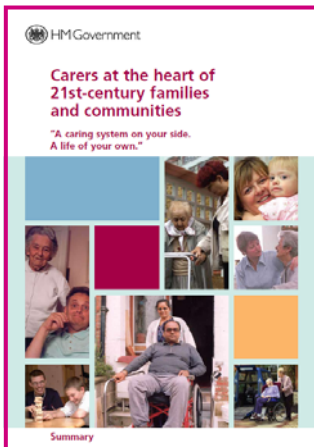
The results and recommendations have been put into a full report about the project, and have already been shared with North of Tyne NHS and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. We will be asking these organisations to tell LINK how they can help to improve experiences for young people and to make particular reference to mental health services, based on the young people's film and suggestions.

Copies of the DVDs will be sent to relevant services, commissioners and health bodies, and can be requested by contacting the LINK team on 0191 200 1429 or email link@voda.org.uk. The report will be available to download from LINK's website in due course - www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk.

News from the Care Quality Commission (CQC): New publication informs patients and families what standards to expect from the regulation of their NHS hospital

Following the introduction of a new law, all NHS hospitals in England must now be licensed by the CQC. To be licensed, hospitals must show that they are meeting new essential standards of quality and safety. CQC continuously monitors them to make sure standards are upheld or improvement action is taken. CQC has recently published a leaflet that informs patients, their carers and families what they can expect from these standards - it also explains how important it is to share both good and bad experiences with the CQC. 'What standards to expect from the regulation of your NHS hospital' can now be downloaded from the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Refreshing the National Carers Strategy: Call for Evidence



The new government is refreshing the national Carers Strategy - Carers at the Heart of 21st Century Families and Communities - with a view to producing a clear plan of action for 2011 to 2015.

This will set out the key activities upon which the government - working in partnership with Local Authorities, the NHS, employers, the voluntary sector, local communities and carers - can focus from April 2011 onwards. While the government is not seeking to re-write the strategy, it is keen to hear views on the following key priorities on what will have the greatest impact on improving carers' lives in the next four years.

A template for responses is available, which asks for views on the following priorities:

- ▶ Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their role.
- ▶ Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role.
- ▶ Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role.
- ▶ Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity.
- ▶ Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The deadline for responses is **20 September 2010**. You can read more and download the consultation documents, including an easy read version at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/current-involvement.html or respond directly via email to carersevidence@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Consultation on Adults with Autism Strategy

A 12-week consultation is now underway on the implementation of Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism. The strategy sets a clear framework for all mainstream public sector services to support adults with autism. The consultation seeks views from those with autism, their families, carers and representative organisations on a number of issues such as: diagnosis, increasing awareness amongst frontline staff; appropriate assessment; provision of services and local leadership. The deadline for responses is **Friday 22 October 2010**. You can download the consultation documents at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk/current-involvement.html or from www.dh.gov.uk, or respond by emailing autism@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Local Health and Social Care News Round-Up

▶ Residents asked for views on Pharmacy Services

NHS North of Tyne is asking for residents' views on the current provision of pharmacy services. The results of their survey will inform the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), to be published in February 2011. The survey is open until **1 September 2010**. Go online at www.northoftyne.nhs.uk or for a paper copy phone 0191 217 2599 or email contactus@northoftyne.nhs.uk

▶ North Tyneside Dementia Adviser Service

Special support is on offer in North Tyneside for people with dementia and their carers, thanks to a new Dementia Adviser Service. The role of the Dementia Adviser is to be first point of contact following diagnosis - they can signpost and facilitate engagement with specialist services. For more information or to make a referral contact Paul Bates or Paul Devine on 0191 257 1245 or email paul.bates@alzheimers.org.uk or paul.devine@alzheimers.org.uk

▶ North Tyneside LGBT Network Meeting

The next North Tyneside Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Network meeting will take place on Monday 6 September, 10am to 11.30pm at North Shields Police Station. For more information contact Lynne Makimoto at MESMAC on 0191 277 2050 or email lynne.makimoto@newcastle.gov.uk

▶ Prostate Cancer Support Group

This group provides free information and support for men with prostate cancer, plus their carers, wives and partners. The group holds monthly, themed meetings - the next event is a Walk and Talk with Macmillan and takes place on **Wednesday 8 September**, 6pm at the Rising Sun County Park. For more information contact Pauline Bagnall on 0191 293 4142.

▶ North Tyneside Carers' Centre Events Programme

The Centre has announced details of its new programme of events. At the next meeting of North Tyneside Carers' Forum on **Tuesday 12 October** the topic will be Personal Budgets and Direct Payments - Dispelling the Myths. Other events include a walking and photography event (Monday 11 October) and regular Aquafit and jewellery making sessions. For more information phone 0191 200 1111 or visit www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk

▶ Support group

A weekly support group for people feeling stressed, anxious or depressed starts on 7 September. To be held every Tuesday from 1pm to 3 pm at Margaret Road, Cullercoats. Contact Jane Noble on 07912991391 for information.

Tel: 0191 200 1429 Email: link@voda.org.uk

Website: www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk

Address: North Tyneside LINK, c/o VODA, The Shiremoor Centre, Earsdon Road, Shiremoor, NE27 0HJ (FREEPOST NT LINK)