



Stronger Voice

Your newsletter from North Tyneside LINK
Edition 15 : June 2011

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What is important for LINK this year?

LINK members told us what was important to them at our annual review in March. The LINK board looked at what members had said when they decided on LINK's priorities for the next year.

A key issue 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 have opportunities to influence 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 consortia 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 reablement 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.

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Diary date: LINK members event on Thursday 29 September

▶ presentation by GP consortia

▶ update on HealthWatch

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 643 2623 or email link@voda.org.uk

Ask Ian about 'Ask DAN'

All parents, carers and young people are invited to our meeting with Ian Walton, Transition Officer for North Tyneside Council.



Ian will tell us about the 'Ask DAN' service; how information about this service is getting out to young people, parents and agencies; and how the service is being monitored and evaluated. DAN is the Disabilities and Additional Needs service for children and young people with disabilities. Ian will also talk about what else is planned around information and support for those in transition.

The meeting will take place in the Main Hall at the Shiremoor Centre on Thursday 30 June from 1.30 to 3.30pm.

Please let us know if you would like to attend by Monday 27 June, phone 0191 643 2623 or email link@voda.org.uk

The LINK board invited Ian to meet with LINK members following LINK's commissioned report on transition and acknowledgement of the gap in communication between the council and families by Jacqui Old, Head of Adult Social Care. You can find the LINK's transition report, recommendations and responses on our website at www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk.

For more information call Alison Chalmers or Johanne Mears on 0191 643 2623.

Representing LINK

Our LINK reps met up on 19 May for coffee and cakes and an update on the future arrangements for partnership boards in North Tyneside, see page 3. Although the changes mean our reps will have different opportunities to attend and contribute to partnership boards we continue to have representation and influence on some important groups.

LINK has two representatives on the new **health and wellbeing board**. John Robson is vice-chair of the board and June Davies also attends to represent LINK. If John or June are unable to attend Claire Easton is on stand-by to make sure LINK always has representation.

Pat Bottrill continues to represent LINK at the **North East Ambulance Service LINKs meetings** and the **North of Tyne medicine management group**.



Pat Bottrill

You can read your representatives' notes of the meetings they attend on the LINK website.

New arrangements for health and wellbeing

The way services are planned and commissioned in North Tyneside is changing. Since December 2010, North Tyneside Council, NHS North of Tyne commissioners and GP consortia representatives have been developing new structures and deciding on commissioning priorities. They took their proposals to a stakeholder event in February 2011 with over 30 representatives from across health and social care, including representatives from North Tyneside LINK and the chairs of existing partnership boards.

As a result, five new commissioning partnership boards have been set up:

- ▶ Prevention and health improvement
- ▶ Long term conditions
- ▶ Avoiding hospital admissions and facilitating discharge
- ▶ Mental health
- ▶ Learning disability

These boards will report back to a new Commissioning Executive Board every three months and this board, in turn, reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

It was agreed the boards would not have direct representation of users and carers. Instead, the council and NHS trusts are to widen existing contractual arrangements with North Tyneside Community and Health Care Forum (CHCF) to co-ordinate involvement and engagement across the whole structure. This engagement will be tailored for each board and will focus on the agreed priorities and work plans for each of the five commissioning streams.

At our LINK annual review members were concerned that that the voices of users and carers would be lost under the new arrangements. We will be meeting with Michele Spencer from CHCF to talk about how LINK members' voices will be heard and how members can continue to be actively involved under the new arrangements.

Shaping the future of mental health

Come along to the mental health discussion for adults and older people if you want to have your say and you:

- ▶ use mental health services;
- ▶ care for someone with mental health issues; or
- ▶ have an interest in mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It is important that your voices can be heard under the new commissioning arrangements. At this event there will be time to talk, time to listen and time to look at a range of displays and information including a chance to find out more about North Tyneside LINK.

Thursday 23 June from 10 to 12 at the YMCA, North Shields, NE29 0AB

To book your place call the Community and Health Care Forum on 0191 295 4233 or email paula.chcf@btinternet.com

Busy summer for enter and view

Our enter and view volunteers visited three care homes this month and will be visiting more over the summer. All were full of praise of the standards and quality of care they observed and heard about from residents and carers.

Jemma Hurrell, Business Relationship Officer at North Tyneside Council, says that enter and view is about ordinary people talking to ordinary people and that the scheme is an excellent way of capturing people's views in care homes. She says she is very confident that the scoring and reporting by enter and view volunteers is accurate.

We have been busy interviewing for new members of the team following our call for more volunteers. Our new recruits will be joining existing volunteers to develop their skills and understanding of people with communication difficulties.

Home care - how could services improve?

Last year we looked at people's experiences of home care services in North Tyneside. The LINK Board agreed at their meeting in May that we should re-visit this project to:

- ▶ support users of home care services and their carers to share their views of what works well and what could be better;
- ▶ highlight good practice; and
- ▶ offer recommendations on how services could be improved from a user's point of view.

We will be asking users and carers for views on their home care services later this year. Our findings will be used by the council when they re-tender for home care services in 2012.

Challenging the stigma of mental health



Last month we spent a day filming with young carers, supported by a drama worker and film maker. The young carers took part in learning workshops looking at the stigma of mental health and how people's lives can be affected by the attitudes of others, as well as the impact of language and the media. These workshops gave them ideas for what they wanted to cover in the film. We will be inviting the young carers and staff from the Carers' Centre to a film awards ceremony in the summer.

LINK has invited young people in schools across North Tyneside to enter our competition to design a poster challenging the stigma of mental health.

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.

For more information about our work with young people contact Alison Chalmers on 0191 643 2624 or email alison.chalmers@voda.org.uk

Get informed about personalisation with A4e

Around 400 people in North Tyneside receive direct payments or personal budgets, not to mention those who are in the early stages of the process or funding their own care:

- ▶ Maybe you have an experience to share or an achievement?
- ▶ Maybe you have questions you want to ask about direct payments and personal budgets but are not sure where to get the answers?
- ▶ Maybe you like the idea of a cup of tea and a chat with like-minded people?

A4e North Tyneside Independent Living Services are hosting this event on **Thursday 28 July from 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm at the Shiremoor Centre.**

Tea and coffee will be available together with a bring and share, where A4e invite you to bring along snacks, cakes and biscuits to share with the group – a call for all you budding chefs out there to show off your home baking skills!

Keith Metcalf, researcher from North Tyneside LINK, has been invited by A4e to present the findings of his report on what information is needed and how it should be presented to support the implementation of personalisation in North Tyneside. The report looks at what information is necessary to successfully help service users, carers and the workers who support them to:

- ▶ be aware of the choices they have with a personal budget;
- ▶ understand the choices available to them; and
- ▶ help service users and carers control their social care in a way that is as stress-free and successful as possible.



Your feedback and thoughts on Keith's findings is essential, so come along to find out more and have your say.

To register for this event or for more information about A4e call 0191 258 8930 or email northtynesidedp@a4e.co.uk

What does personalisation mean for you and your organisation?

This is a chance for organisations that provide services and support to older and disabled people and their families to come together and think about the challenges and opportunities that personalisation offers.

The event is part of North Tyneside's Putting People First programme.

Thursday 14 July from 9.15am to 4pm at Langdale Professional Development Centre

For more information and to book a place phone 0191 643 8914 or email workforce.development@northtyneside.gov.uk

Your views on children's heart services

There is still time to give your views on the future of children's heart services at the Freeman Hospital.

Consultation closes on 1 July. Please send your comments for inclusion in the LINK response by Tuesday 28 June by email to link@voda.org.uk or phone the LINK team on 0191 643 2623.

NHS quality accounts

Thanks to LINK members for their thoughts on the quality accounts for our local NHS trusts. You can read LINK's responses to the quality accounts for Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust and North East Ambulance Service on our website.

Health plan for North Tyneside

The North Tyneside locality delivery plan has been jointly developed by North Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the two emerging GP consortia, Care First and Engage Health. Schemes to reduce emergency admissions to hospital by building on falls prevention work, providing more care for sick children at home and working more closely with care homes are all included in the plan.

Read the plan at www.nhsnorthoftyne.nhs.uk

Reporting on patient experience



The LINK board approved our report on patient experience at North Tyneside General Hospital at their meeting in March 2011. John Robson, LINK chair, and Johanne Mears, LINK manager, met with Jim Mackey, Chief Executive of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust in May to discuss the findings and recommendations of the report. Read the written responses to the report on our LINK website.

The LINK board decided in June that they would ask Northumbria NHS Trust for a more detailed response to the report recommendations. The board will invite representatives of the trust to meet with them later in the year.

News from the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Dignity and respect for NHS hospital patients - reports of unannounced inspection visits to 100 hospitals are now being published. The CQC report for Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust will be published during the summer.

Working with LINKs - this month the CQC will be publishing its guide for LINKs and how to work with the CQC. We will include a link to the guide in our next LINK e-newsletter.

NHS listening exercise

The listening exercise carried out by the NHS Future Forum canvassed the views of people who work in health and social care, as well as in the third sector. The forum estimates that 4000 individuals had taken part by the third week in May, discussing NHS modernisation at over 200 separate listening meetings and events both at local and regional level.

The Secretary of State, Ministers and senior officials attended over 30 events to hear from staff and stakeholders. Prime Minister David Cameron and Andrew Lansley attended an event involving patients and voluntary sector groups such as the mental health charity Rethink on 19 May.

Forum chair Professor Steve Field said “We are hearing that there needs to be a wider range of clinical expertise on commissioning available at a local level beyond only GPs. But that is not as straightforward as it sounds – people in the NHS also feel we need to avoid tokenism where each staff group is represented at every level on every committee.”

“The pace of modernising change is also emerging as an issue. The readiness of each area to take change forward differs. So we may need to vary the pace of change around the country.”

“..... and one of the most interesting points being made is whether and how we can use competition to bring providers together to provide packages of care along patient pathways rather than based on specific procedures like acute care.”

North Tyneside LINK attended a regional voices listening event organised by VONNE in May. We sent a response to the listening exercise based on comments made by LINK members.

Read our response to the listening exercise on the LINK website.

Free treatment for free prescription holders



If you get free prescriptions you may be able to get free advice and treatment from your pharmacist without the need to go to your GP. You will need to show proof that you do not need to pay such as your HC2 certificate or another form of exemption certificate, evidence of full time education, your income support award or tax credit award.

You should go to a pharmacy with a **‘Think Pharmacy first’** window sticker to discuss your symptoms. The pharmacist is qualified to diagnose and treat all minor ailments on the Think Pharmacy First scheme.

Ask for a copy of the Think Pharmacy First leaflet to find out which health conditions are covered and what you have to do to get free treatment. Or go to the Think Pharmacy First webpage at www.northoftyne.nhs.uk

Local health and social care news

▶ **Backworth Ambulance Station opening ceremony**

LINK members are invited to the official opening of Backworth Ambulance Station by Linda Arkley, Elected Mayor of North Tyneside. The opening ceremony is from 10 to 11am on Saturday 2 July. If you would like to attend, please contact Kenny Helyer on 0191 430 2099 or email kenny.helyer@neas.nhs.uk

Following the opening ceremony, there will be a Community Open Day at the station from 11am to 4pm. Local residents are invited to come along to look around the new station and learn more about the ambulance service and some of the voluntary groups that serve their community.

▶ **Valuing People Now - your views on housing, health and employment**

North Tyneside Learning Disabilities Partnership Board has arranged a special carers' forum to hear your views on local services and opportunities for people with a learning disability.

Thursday 23 June from 10am to 1.30pm at Wallsend People's Centre

For more information and to book your place phone Sue or Barry on 0191 200 1100 or email learningdisabilities.federation@virgin.net

▶ **Volunteers wanted for health research**

The Institute for Ageing and Health at Newcastle University is looking for volunteers for their research into:

- ▶ Changes in physical activity as people retire.
- ▶ Treatment for Parkinson's ataxia affecting balance and coordination.
- ▶ Speech and voice in people with Parkinson's or depression.

Contact Sarah Armstrong on 0191 248 1288 for more information. Volunteers are paid reasonable travel expenses and are given a £10 shopping voucher.

And finally.....

▶ **Ever thought of joining the LINK Board?**

We are looking for an individual member and an organisational member to join the LINK Board. To find out more about being a board member call Johanne Mears on 0191 643 2623 or email link@voda.org.uk

▶ **LINK Board meeting**

The next meeting of the LINK Board is on Tuesday 12 July.

▶ **Your next e-newsletter**

Look out for your next LINK e-newsletter on Tuesday 12 July

Phone: 0191 643 2623 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)