



# Stronger Voice

Your newsletter from North Tyneside LINK

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## New Manager for North Tyneside LINK



Following the retirement of Dave Shaw in May 2009, Johanne Mears has been appointed as the new Manager for North Tyneside LINK.

“Hello everyone. My name is Johanne Mears and I am now in my third week as North Tyneside LINK manager - so I still have a lot to learn! My experience is based largely in the Health and Social Care sector and I have worked in North Tyneside for the Alzheimer’s Society for a number of years. I am a local resident living with my family in Whitley Bay, and have always been interested in how individuals from our communities can become involved in Health and Social Care developments. I am also a great believer in working across organisations and communities to unite those struggling to be heard on a common cause. Invariably people will say – I thought it was only me! I hope LINK will provide the opportunity for all the “only me’s” to become an “us” and have a much stronger voice and influence how our local Health and Social care services develop.”

You can contact Johanne on 0191 200 1429 or [johanne.mears@voda.org.uk](mailto:johanne.mears@voda.org.uk)

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

# Project Updates

## Information Provision

One of the areas found to be of greatest concern to LINK members is information. In order to focus this project, LINK is focusing on information available to carers. We have begun researching the information currently available, and how this information is accessed, with the aim of identifying any gaps or barriers to provision, as well as recognising good quality information. So far, LINK has been working in partnership with The Learning Disabilities Federation and North Tyneside Carers' Centre on this issue and three focus groups are being held with local carers to find out about their experiences of accessing information.

### **New Information Service at North Tyneside General Hospital**

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust is implementing a new Information Service, part of which will be an Information Centre run out of North Tyneside General Hospital. The Trust is consulting with the public on the service via a Patient Information Implementation Group who offer ideas and suggestions for how the service should be shaped. On May 28, eight LINK members attended a meeting to hear more about the plans and to offer their input. A second meeting is being held at the hospital on **Thursday 16 July** at 10am, to which LINK members are invited. If you are interested in attending this meeting please email [amy.rudd@voda.org.uk](mailto:amy.rudd@voda.org.uk) or telephone LINK on 0191 200 1429.

### **Patient Information Advisory Group**

As a result of the research described above, LINK has been invited to have a representative on Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Patient Information Advisory Group (see page 5). You should also find enclosed with this newsletter a survey from Sandra Lonsdale, Information Manager at the Trust, asking for your opinions on the way information is provided. Please complete the survey and return it in the envelopes provided.

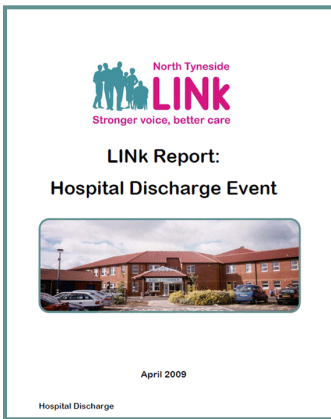
### **Reader's Panel**

Finally, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust have also invited LINK members to join their Reader's Panel. The role of the panel is to provide comments on:

- whether information is easy to read
- whether it is easy to understand
- whether content is ordered in a helpful way
- the use of language
- the tone, design and layout of information
- any suggestions or comments you may have to improve the leaflet

As a panel member you will be sent leaflets either monthly, every two months or quarterly, and asked to read and comment on the information using an evaluation form. Comments received from Panel members are collated and sent to the authors of the leaflets who are then encouraged to include the comments and amendments made. If you are interested in joining the Reader's Panel, please contact Amy Rudd on 0191 200 1429 or email [amy.rudd@voda.org.uk](mailto:amy.rudd@voda.org.uk).

## Hospital Discharge



The information and evidence gathered at LINK's Hospital Discharge event on 19 March, was put into a report (left) and submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee of North Tyneside's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as evidence for its study into the process. LINK also shared this report with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, where it has been circulated amongst operational service managers, the Deputy Head of Nursing and the Modern Matrons. The report has also been made publically available on our website.

Recently, LINK presented its findings to the Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where it was well received. We are awaiting their conclusions on this matter and a small working group of local organisations will continue to look at this issue with LINK. For more information on this project call LINK on 0191 200 1429.

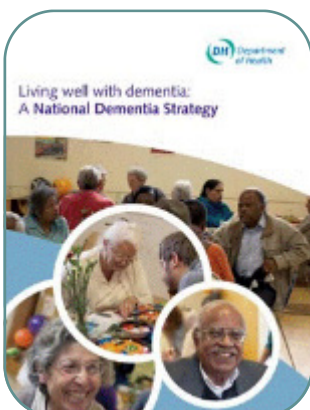
## Personalisation

LINK now has a small working group who will be researching and gathering voluntary sector organisations' questions and concerns regarding personal budgets. We have been working with Simon Mawhinney, Service Manager at North Tyneside Council, and will be holding a voluntary sector event around this subject in July (date and venue tbc).

## Counselling

We have received the draft report from Community and Health Care Forum, which maps counselling provision in North Tyneside. From this, we will be asking LINK members to help us identify gaps in provision and to make appropriate recommendations to service providers.

## National Dementia Strategy



In February 2009, the eagerly awaited National Dementia Strategy: Living Well with Dementia (pictured left) was launched. With the support of The Alzheimer's Society, LINK brought together interested parties within the voluntary and community sector to discuss how this new strategy will impact and be implemented locally. LINK has requested information from North Tyneside Council, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, North Tyneside PCT, NHS North of Tyne and the Northumberland Tyne and Wear Trust to find out how they intend to implement the strategy.

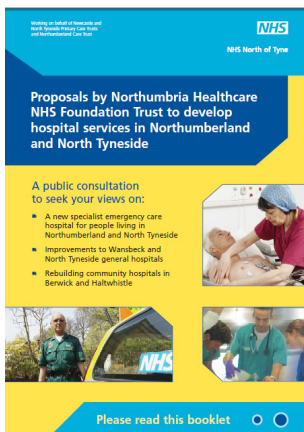
# Urgent Care

As described in May's edition of Stronger Voice, the proposed plans for changing the way urgent care operates in North Tyneside is high up on LINK members' agenda. As an update and for new readers, the following summarises the project so far.

**Background:** Local people are being consulted on a £200million package of proposals developed by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for hospital services in Northumberland and North Tyneside. The proposals are for:

- A new specialist emergency care hospital for people living in Northumberland and North Tyneside
- Improvements to Wansbeck and North Tyneside general hospitals
- Rebuilding community hospitals in Berwick and Haltwhistle

**LINK's Involvement:** Following two consultation events in March, LINK submitted a report to the Trust asking for answers to LINK members' questions and concerns about the plans. LINK received a detailed response from the Director of Emergency Care acknowledging the concerns and taking on board many of LINK members' suggestions. However, LINK's Board have requested further clarification on a number of points before LINK makes its formal response to the consultation.



**Have your say:** The Trust are continuing to consult the public on the new plans and LINK members are encouraged to take part so that their voices and views are heard. You may have seen the document pictured left - this is the consultation pack. You can request a copy of this by contacting the Trust on 0191 217 2599 or you can complete the survey online at [www.northoftyne.nhs.uk/developinghospitalervices](http://www.northoftyne.nhs.uk/developinghospitalervices)

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are also holding a number of public meetings so that people can hear more about the plans and ask questions of the Trust.

The following meetings take place in North Tyneside, with a number of further meetings taking place across Northumberland:

Tuesday 7 July, 6pm	Whitley Bay High School, Whitley Bay
Friday 10 July, 2pm	Wallsend Town Hall, Wallsend

To view the dates and times of all meetings, telephone 0191 217 2599 or visit: [www.northoftyne.nhs.uk/developinghospitalervices](http://www.northoftyne.nhs.uk/developinghospitalervices)

The consultation closes on **Tuesday 28 July**.

To contact Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust directly: Telephone 0191 217 2599

Email: [getinvolved@northoftyne.nhs.uk](mailto:getinvolved@northoftyne.nhs.uk)

Public Engagement and Communications Team, NHS North of Tyne, Bevan House, 1 Esh Plaza, Sir Bobby Robson Way, Great Park, Newcastle, NE13 9BA

# Opportunities to Represent LINK

There is a variety of groups in North Tyneside that LINK has been invited, or has an entitlement, to be a part of. It is not possible for LINK Board members to sit on all of these groups and we would therefore like to invite those of you with experience or expertise in certain areas to sit on these groups as official LINK representatives.

As an official representative you would be authorised by the LINK Board to speak on behalf of the LINK. In order to ensure that members attending such groups fully represent the LINK, the Board have come up with a short list of requirements that they expect from official LINK representatives:

✓	Represent the LINK, not personal interests
✓	Attend regular meetings
✓	Liaise with LINK staff once an agenda has been received to determine if the LINK holds any evidence that is relevant to the group and to discuss the views that the LINK might want to express
✓	Report back to LINK staff on meetings attended

We currently need members on the following groups/committees:

Patient  
Information  
Advisory Group

North East  
Ambulance Service  
LINK Group

**If you are interested in, or would like further information about any of these opportunities, please contact LINK on 0191 200 1429 or email [link@voda.org.uk](mailto:link@voda.org.uk)**

## Help to Spread the Word About LINK

The 'Network' part of North Tyneside LINK is most important. We believe that with our members' help, we could reach all parts of the community and encourage a wide range of people and groups to have a say in the health and social care issues that are important to them.

LINK has a large supply of leaflets and publicity material that can be given to people to encourage them to become members. If you are attending any events over the summer and would like to take, display or distribute LINK information, please get in touch and we will provide you with the relevant material. Telephone LINK on 0191 200 1429 for more information.

# LINK News Round Up

The following summarises the other work that LINK is currently involved in...

## LINK Board Recruitment Underway

LINK is pleased to announce that it has appointed three organisational members of its Board: Alan Gerono (Age Concern), Ellen Vick (New Prospects) and Hugh Welch (Community and Health Care Forum) and two individual members: John Tovell and Joan Knox. The remaining places on LINK's Board will be appointed in the coming weeks, following a second selection process.

## Working with Young People

In order to find out the health and social care interests of young people, the LINK host team have been working with five members of the Youth Action Team (YAT). The volunteers, who are also LINK members, are working on new publicity material for LINK. If you are, or know of anyone who would be interested in taking part in this project, please contact LINK on 0191 200 1429 or email Development Worker [hannah.claydon@voda.org.uk](mailto:hannah.claydon@voda.org.uk)



## North East LINKs Conference

On 15 July 2009, a Regional LINKs Conference will take place at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland. This one-day event aims to find out if there is a need for a Regional LINKs Network and if so, what its purpose and function would be. Ten members from each North East LINK are attending the conference in order to discuss

this theme and take part in workshops around good practice and sharing ideas. A conference report will be produced and made available after the event.

## LINK Annual Reports

All LINKs have to publish their first annual report by the end of June 2009.

The staff team have worked hard to produce this report which outlines LINK's activities, budget and governance details from April 2008 to March 2009.

Copies of the report will soon be available, both to download from our website and requested from the LINK team.



## North Tyneside LINK - Out and About

We're always looking to increase LINK's membership and part of this work involves the host team attending community events and venues in order to tell people about LINK and what we do. We have recently attended the Carers' Week Celebration event, drop-in sessions held by the Extended Schools Services and placed an information

stand in the Oxford Centre, Longbenton (pictured, left). If you know of any forthcoming events that it would be appropriate for LINK to attend, please email [amy.rudd@voda.org.uk](mailto:amy.rudd@voda.org.uk) or telephone 0191 200 1429 with your suggestions.

# North East Ambulance Service: Consultation on Trust Status

The North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) has opened its public consultation on its applications to become a Foundation Trust. The following information is summarised from NEAS's website:

## “What is a Foundation Trust and why do we want to be one?”

Foundation Trusts are part of the NHS and provide free health care based on need. They have some major advantages over the way NHS Trusts, such as NEAS, are run at the moment:

- Foundation Trusts are free from central government control and more accountable to the communities that they serve.
- Foundation Trusts are organised in such a way that people from local communities, members of staff, patients and partners, can have a much bigger say in influencing health services.
- We believe that as an NHS Foundation Trust we will be able to work more closely with members of the public in our area, reflecting their needs in the development of services and ensuring that health care is timely and effective.
- We will have more freedom to look for better ways of meeting our own patients' needs and priorities - but will still be closely inspected to make sure we meet performance and other NHS standards.
- We will have new powers to enter into legal and financial agreements. We will also have more freedom to borrow and to invest.
- As a Trust, we can give greater say to our staff as we intend that they should all be members. This way they will not only continue to provide services, but will have a greater input in to service development.
- Finally, only the best organisations can become Foundation trusts. We are already proud of our achievements, which have been recognised by the Healthcare Commission as the best performing ambulance service in the country.

Your participation, views and feedback are vital to the success of our application to become a Foundation Trust. To take part in the consultation visit [www.neambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.neambulance.nhs.uk), email [consultations@neas.nhs.uk](mailto:consultations@neas.nhs.uk) or telephone 0191 430 2099. **The consultation is open until 28 August 2009.**”



## PALS: Patient Advice and Liaison Service

As a patient, relative or carer sometimes you may need to turn to someone for on-the-spot help, advice and support. This is where the Patient Advice and Liaison Service comes in.

NHS North of Tyne PALS provides confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care it provides and guiding you through the different services available from the NHS.

The service aims to:

- Advise and support patients, their families and carers
- Provide information on NHS services
- Listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries
- Help sort out problems quickly on your behalf

PALS acts independently when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and, where appropriate, relevant organisations, to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. If necessary, PALS can also refer patients to specific local or national-based support agencies.

The service is confidential and can be contacted on:

Freephone: 0800 0320202

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

Freepost: RLTC-SGHH-EGXJ

North of Tyne PALS, The Old Stables, Grey's Yard, Morpeth, NE61 1QD

## Contribute to Stronger Voice


The next edition of Stronger Voice will go out mid-August. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter as a LINK member, or there is something you want to read about that hasn't already been covered, please let us know.

Send your queries to Amy Rudd on 0191 200 1429 or email [amy.rudd@voda.org.uk](mailto:amy.rudd@voda.org.uk)

## Contact Us

 Telephone: 0191 200 1429       Email: [link@voda.org.uk](mailto:link@voda.org.uk)

 Website: [www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk](http://www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk)

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