

Think LINK



Newcastle LINK quarterly newsletter, December 2011

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If you need this newsletter in another format please call the LINK Support Team free on 0800 756 9528

Upcoming LINK Board meetings

17 January 2012, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

20 March 2012, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Venue: Brian Roycroft Room, 5th floor, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

LINK Board meetings are open to the public. The agenda, papers and minutes are available at www.newcastlelink.org.uk prior to meetings.

Happy holidays!

The LINK Support Team would like to thank everyone who has taken part in Newcastle LINK activities and events this year. Best wishes from Craig, Deborah, Jaz, Julie and Rachel.



Want to submit an article?

If you have an article that you think Newcastle LINK would be interested in then we would like to hear from you. Please email any articles for consideration by 24 February to findoutmore@newcastlelink.org.uk or post to 'FREEPOST NEWCASTLE LINK'.

Please note we cannot guarantee we will include everything that is submitted to us. We also reserve the right to proof and edit for publication without consulting the author(s).



Newcastle LINK is supported by a partnership between Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (registered company 6681475, registered charity 1125877) and Community Action on Health (registered charity 1116182)



Would you like to join the LINK Executive Board?

Newcastle LINK is going through a round of nominations and elections during December and January 2012 to recruit Board members, who will start in March 2012. The Board is made up of volunteer members and is the public face of the LINK. You can learn more about the responsibilities of Board members by looking at 'The Board' section of the Newcastle LINK website at <http://bit.ly/tVcCvz>

Current Board member John Reid says "I see Newcastle LINK as a platform to raise major issues on health and social care inequalities within communities - and to highlight any needs raised in the process. There is a need for communities to work together. I enjoy seeing people get answers to their questions and I am never surprised at the number of volunteers willing to get involved. I love working with volunteers and I love the challenges Newcastle LINK brings."

If you're interested in finding out more please contact Rachel Head for more information on 0191 235 7026 or rachel.head@cvsnewcastle.org.uk

Information to carers and relatives on hospital discharge

We mentioned in our September newsletter that Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had asked Newcastle LINK to carry out a piece of work. The trust's Patient Carer and Public Involvement Committee wanted to find out what relatives and carers thought about the information they are given when someone is discharged from hospital.

We received over 70 responses to our surveys, covering the Newcastle General, RVI, Freeman and Walkergate hospitals. A report was approved by the LINK Executive Board at its November meeting and has been well received by the trust. Here are some of the findings:

- The majority of people who took part in the surveys were satisfied with the amount of the information they received but almost one quarter felt that there was too little information.
- The majority of people were happy with the depth of information they received but, again, nearly one quarter felt that the information they received lacked detail.
- Three quarters of people felt that the information was given at the right time.

"No decision about me without me"

All healthcare staff aim to inform patients about the treatment and care options available to them when a choice is offered. As part of this, the MAGIC programme is looking to extend its Patient and Public Involvement Panel. MAGIC stands for 'making good decisions in collaboration with patients' and the panel is closely involved with MAGIC's programme team and with clinicians. Together they are looking at the best ways of encouraging and helping patients to be more involved in decisions about their care and treatment. Clinical teams (funded by the Health Foundation) are also being trained and supported in order to improve shared decision-making.

If you'd like to find out more or be part of the Patient and Public Involvement Panel please contact Carole Dodd on 0191 282 4801 or Carole.Dodd@nuth.nhs.uk

Children's heart services – the story so far

During the summer there was a public NHS consultation on proposed changes to children's congenital heart services that could potentially affect Newcastle's Freeman Hospital (see our June newsletter for details). Newcastle LINK also held an open forum to gather local opinions and published an official response to the consultation.

In November, London's Royal Brompton Hospital sought a judicial review on the NHS consultation as it could have resulted in the closure of its children's congenital heart services. The review ruled that the consultation process unlawful, but the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (which was formed for the consultation) is now appealing against the decision. A hearing date for the appeal is expected to be in early 2012.

It is possible that there may have to be a new consultation and review about these heart services – we will keep you posted on developments.

Open forum on modernising health and social care

Newcastle LINK's open forum on 7 November discussed two important topics: 'joined up/integrated services' and the 'Any Qualified Provider' initiative:

- **Joined up/ integrated services**

How do we make sure the NHS modernisation programme leads to better integration of health and care services around people's needs? This was a consultation issue raised by the NHS Future Forum, which is considering the Health and Social Care Bill currently going through Parliament and the House of Lords.

- **Any Qualified Provider initiative**

Patients should be able to choose from a list of qualified providers for a particular service or treatment. What information do people need to make those choices? This was a consultation by NHS North of Tyne PCT under guidance from the Department of Health.



More than 25 people attended this forum, ranging from individuals to representatives from voluntary sector organisations as well as from NHS North of Tyne and Newcastle City Council.

Newcastle LINK then produced responses to both consultation topics and these can be downloaded from 'LINK reports' section of www.newcastlelink.org.uk

LINK reports - an update

Newcastle LINK published several reports in May this year. These reports contained recommendations on how health and social care services could be improved and were sent to commissioners and service providers for their consideration. The feedback was positive, with most suggesting they would take the information into account. The reports were also sent to Newcastle City Council to be fed into the Newcastle Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The report on 'Using interpreters when accessing health and adult social care' (available from the 'resources' section of www.newcastlelink.org.uk) was used as the basis for a workshop on providing services to BME groups, held on 29 September by the Newcastle Bridges Clinical Commissioning Group. It is also informing ongoing discussions on how and when primary care staff should book interpreters. In addition, the report has influenced NHS North of Tyne when introducing new services, for example, ensuring interpreters are used appropriately when new community pharmacy services are introduced.

Newcastle LINK will continue to check on what difference our reports have made and further updates will appear in the next newsletter... watch this space!

Health and wellbeing in Newcastle

As part of the government's proposed Health and Social Care Bill, Newcastle City Council is putting into place new arrangements for wellbeing and health across the city. The Bill will require each local authority area to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board and the council proposes to do this in two ways:

1. Establish a broad remit and membership for the Health and Wellbeing Board
2. Replace the former Local Strategic Partnership with new arrangements, which link the Health and Wellbeing Board with other partnership arrangements.

The council's aim is to link health issues with its work on wider social and economic challenges across Newcastle. In the light of this the council has made the following proposals:

- Establish a Health and Wellbeing Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- Work with partners to evaluate, improve and strengthen other partnership arrangements, including housing, the environment and the economy.
- Establish a six-monthly Newcastle Partnership Forum. These meetings would link to an annual State of the City event with wider public involvement.



Think LINK is a quarterly newsletter published on behalf of Newcastle LINK by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS. The information in Think LINK is published in good faith but Newcastle LINK and NCVS accept no liability for any inaccuracies or omissions. Copies of this newsletter can also be downloaded from the LINK website.

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