

Hull LINK News



Issue 12
April 2010

Welcome to the latest news bulletin from Hull LINK, the City's Local Involvement Network for Health and Social Care.

New LINK Investigations Underway - Give Us Your Views

As promised in our last newsletter, this issue brings more details on the new priority issues identified by people involved in the LINK.

Patient transport has emerged as a key issue of local concern, and we are well underway with gathering people's views on what improvements they would like to see to ensure a smooth journey for those needing to access health services. See inside also for updates on our other new investigations into alcohol services; eating disorder services; and maternity services.

It's crucial that local people have their say on these issues – the more people give their views, the more weight and impact our recommendations will have when they are delivered to the people who plan and deliver health and care services. So if you or any family members or friends have experience of our priority issues do give us your feedback – by completing a short survey you'll be helping secure improvements for the whole community.



Inside you can also find updates on some of the key investigations from our first set of priority issues, including our reports on Mental Health Services for Young People and Living with Dementia. LINKs are all about finding out what people think of local services and enabling them to suggest improvements to service providers, and we're encouraged by the feedback on our recent reports. Our reports have opened up some important opportunities to work with local services to ensure things improve, and we'll be actively pursuing these.

We've been really pleased lately by the new level of interest in Hull LINK. This has resulted in a large increase in LINK membership and a lot of interest in our reports from local and regional media. It seems that the message is spreading that LINKs are here to secure improvements for everyone who uses health and care services – a heartening response to the hard work of all involved.

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www.hull-link.org.uk

LINK
MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Hospital Transport and Car Parking - Have Your Say

Hull LINK has spearheaded a major investigation into Hospital Transport and are appealing for local people to 'have their say'.

Hospital Transport is one of our major priorities as many local people have expressed concerns with:

- Getting to and from Castle Hill and Hull Royal Infirmary by bus, car or other forms of transport.
- Using car parking facilities at both hospitals.
- Accessing NHS transport services.



We will call for change based on the feedback we receive from individuals and organisations.

How to 'Have Your Say'

LINK Membership Engagement Officer George Campbell has been leading on research for this project: "I have spoken to many groups and individuals in order to get their views and people are passionate about this issue. However, in order to send a message and call for improvements we need as much feedback as possible. Now is the time to 'have your say' and make a difference to local services." You can have your say by:

- ◆ Come and have your say at our Hospital Transport and Car Parking event (see page 10 for more details).
- ◆ Complete one of our surveys:

Hospital Transport Survey – this is for anyone who would like to tell us about their experience of getting to and from hospital, and the ease of parking at these sites. Alternatively, if you have taken a friend or relative to and from an appointment, you can share your experiences via this survey also.

Survey For Health Workers / Volunteers – Are you a health worker or a volunteer? Have any of your clients expressed a problem with any of the above hospital transport issues? If 'yes' you can tell us about the difficulties they have faced via this survey.

Surveys are available to complete online at www.hull-link.org/have-your-say or you can request a paper copy by calling 01482 221372 option 2.

The closing date for completed surveys will be Friday 7th May 2010.

Hull LINK set to investigate Alcohol Services

Hull LINK will investigate fears about the city's alcohol treatment services.

NHS studies have shown that Hull experiences well over the national average of alcohol problems. In Hull it is estimated that 1 in 4 adults are drinking to harmful levels and that a further 1 in 20 adults are dependant on alcohol.*

LINK Team Leader Jonathan Appleton comments: "There are no shortage of messages about the dangers of alcohol abuse and we all know the risks of drinking too much. However, the fact is that many people in Hull require support and treatment for their alcohol problem. The concern is that services are struggling to cope with demand and that many people are not receiving the appropriate level of support in order to tackle their drinking."

The investigation will involve collecting the views of people who use alcohol services as well as those of health professionals, volunteers and community groups / organisations. Hull LINK will ask people to consider the quality of:

- Treatment available.
- Information available on alcohol services.
- Aftercare and support received.
- Rehabilitation and detox services.



How to 'Have Your Say'

- ◆ If you represent a group or organisation you can request the Hull LINK to visit and obtain your views or the views of your service users. For more details call 01482 221372 option 2.
- ◆ There are two surveys available. One is to gather the views of people who have used alcohol services, the other is for professionals or volunteers whose clients use alcohol services. These are available in printed form or on our website at www.hull-link.org/have-your-say.
- ◆ Contact Jonathan Appleton, Hull LINK Team Leader, for more details on 01482 221372 option 2 or email jappleton@hull-cvs.co.uk.

*Source: 'Understanding Alcohol Misuse Needs In Hull and East Riding'.

Eating Disorders—Your Experiences of Local Services

It is estimated that up to 1.6 million people* in the UK are affected by eating disorders, and in its latest investigation, Hull LINK is urging people to share their views on the services available locally for eating disorders.

As with all LINK investigations, it is vital for as many people as possible to have their say on this issue so that there will be greater weight to the recommendations we deliver. The LINK is therefore encouraging both people who have used local services and also health professional and community groups to come forward in a variety of different ways.

How to 'Have Your Say'

Helen Blanchard who is leading on this project comments; "we have been working closely with S.E.E.D, the local support group for people with eating disorders, and a number of people have already come forward to share their views. We know how difficult it can be for both carers and sufferers to talk about their condition which is why we have set up ways for people to be able to share their views in an environment they are comfortable with."

You can have your say by:

- ◆ Completing one of our surveys. There are two surveys available - one to gather views from sufferers and one to gather views from carers. Both surveys can be obtained on the 'Have Your Say' section of our website or you can call our office on 01482 221372 (option 2) to request a paper copy.
- ◆ Email, or post anonymously, your views and thoughts on service improvements to hblanchard@hull-cvs.co.uk / Helen Blanchard, Hull LINK, Centre 88, Saner Street, Hull, HU3 2TR.
- ◆ Contact Helen Blanchard, Hull LINK Engagement Worker, in confidence on 01482 221372 option 2 or email hblanchard@hull-cvs.co.uk
- ◆ If you are looking for support and advice, S.E.E.D. Eating Disorder Support Services offers a range of services for both sufferers and carers. For more information contact S.E.E.D. on 01482 718130 or visit their website at www.seedeatingdisorders.co.uk

*Source: 'beat™ beating eating disorders' (Eating Disorders Association)

Local Maternity Services - Tell Us Your Experiences

At recent events and forums, a number of people have shared with the LINK their experiences of local maternity services. In light of this, Hull LINK is keen to know what other residents of the city think about local services too.

Until the end June, Hull LINK will be gathering views and experiences via a short survey. The survey will look at where and when you had your baby and will ask for experiences of:



- services during pregnancy
- services during labour and birth
- services whilst in hospital
- care received at home

The survey is open to anyone, both Mums and Dads, that have had a baby in the last 5 years (since April 2005).

How to 'Have Your Say'

- ◆ Surveys are currently being distributed to various nurseries and children's centres around Hull. Look out for our posters in your local centre.
- ◆ Alternatively you can complete a survey on our website by visiting www.hull-link.org/have-your-say or call us on 01482 221372 (option 2) to request a printed copy.
- ◆ If you know a friend or relative that could complete a survey, or know of any children's centres, nurseries or other locations that could display our posters and surveys, please call us and we will supply you with as many copies as you need.



We'll keep you updated on the results of this survey in our next newsletter.

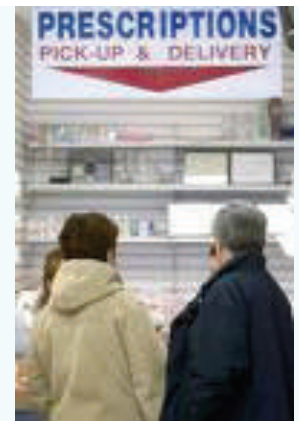
Hospital Discharge Report Calls for a Better Deal for Patients

As this newsletter goes to press the final draft of Hull LINK's report on our investigation into Hospital discharge is being prepared.

Our enquiry is the biggest single piece of work conducted by Hull LINK to date, with well over 100 people and groups having their say on the issue. Hospital discharge was the most popular choice when we first asked people what issues they wanted us to investigate, indicating the strength of feeling on the issue. This demanded a special effort to reflect the level of concern, including the first use of our enter and view power at local hospitals where our trained visitors gathered patients' experiences.

The report will call for:

- Improved communication with patients and their carers about discharge arrangements.
- Reduced waiting time for medication for patients about to leave hospital.
- Better assessment of care needs for patients due to be discharged to ensure that people can manage at home.
- Improved information and referral to support after discharge to ensure people get the help they need in the community.



Project leader Jonathan Appleton comments "We had more feedback on this issue than any other we've examined so far, and the report contains some powerful material on the kinds of difficulties patients have faced when they come to be discharged."

"While some people had received a good service, many others reported problems. Some complained they had not been kept up to date with arrangements for their discharge, leading to anxiety and stress. Another common theme was that patients face waits of many hours to receive medication on discharge. And many people felt there was a lack of support for patients following discharge, leaving people unsupported and without proper care at home."

Our report contains recommendations to deliver improvements for patients, and will be submitted to the local NHS and council under our legal powers to call for change.

We're aware that the problems don't have easy solutions, but this LINK report can be the start of delivering key improvements in services for some of the most vulnerable users of health services. We'll keep you posted on progress with putting our recommendations into action.

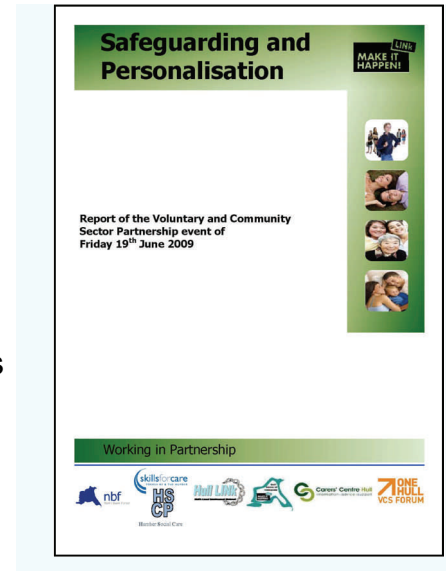
Keep an eye on our website www.hull-link.org.uk for the published report, or call or email to request a copy.

Update - Safeguarding & Personalisation

In the last newsletter we brought you an update on the LINK's report into Safeguarding and Personalisation.

When LINK recommendations are taken on by the NHS or Hull City Council we will always follow up to make sure improvements are taking place.

Our first follow up on Safeguarding and Personalisation is scheduled for June 2010. We will then bring you further updates on how the recommendations from this report are being put into practice.



LINK Act on GP Appointment Concerns

Over recent months Hull LINK representatives have heard many concerns regarding GP appointments. Many people spoke to us about difficulties arranging same day appointments and appointments at more 'convenient' times. For example we were asked why more surgeries couldn't have weekend and evening sessions which would be more in keeping with people's busy lifestyles. We have also heard concerns about the attitudes of some GP receptionists.

Shortly before the deadline for this newsletter Hull LINK met with the local NHS to discuss service improvements.

George Campbell, LINK Membership Engagement Officer, explains:

"The news we received from the NHS was very positive. Through public consultation the NHS have made GP appointments one of their top priorities and have begun extensive work to improve services. As the NHS is already taking action Hull LINK will not be pursuing an independent enquiry at this time. However we will request to meet with the NHS in six months to review progress on this issue."

We will bring you a further update about plans to improve GP appointment services in our next newsletter.

Mental Health Services for Young People - LINK Report will Lead to Service Improvements

Hull LINKs report on Mental Health Services For Young People has led to the NHS pledging to improve services.

The Report

- Stated that many young people had problems when they are transferred from children's to adults' services. This left them feeling distressed, frustrated and without adequate support.

The Result

- Humber Mental Health NHS Trust has pledged to improve communication between adult and child services. This will involve young people being transferred from children's to adults' services more efficiently. As a result young people will receive a better standard of care.

LINK Team Leader Jonathan Appleton:

"This is fantastic news. The transfer from children's to adults' services was arguably the biggest concern from the report."

"However we are still aiming for yet more improvements. The report has now gone to NHS board level, which is the highest level of the NHS. Commissioners at NHS Hull (who decide on how the NHS spends its budget) are also now considering the report. We will continue to press for change."

"In the meantime we can celebrate the work around transfer which will ease the distress of young people experiencing mental health difficulties. Credit has to go to all those who volunteered their feedback for the report and especially local young people. Their views made the biggest difference because of their first hand experience of services."



LINK Report To Improve Dementia Services

A report from Hull LINK is helping secure improvements in local dementia services.

Recommendations made by the LINK to improve training, information and user involvement are to be included in Hull's new strategy for dementia services.

It is estimated that there are more than 2,500 people in Hull with dementia and that the condition leads to 60,000 deaths in the UK per year*. The Department Of Health has recently made dementia a national priority with the National Dementia Strategy.

As a result Hull LINK worked with local voluntary and community organisations in order to review local dementia services. The report on this review 'Living Well with Dementia – Shaping the Service' called for:

- Training to be provided for health professionals to increase their knowledge and understanding around dementia.
- Information to be made available in public places around dementia and local support.
- The media to be used to increase awareness of dementia.
- Increased service user choice and control through seeking the views of users / carers and adapting services accordingly.
- Increased partnership working and consultation between the NHS, Local Council and the voluntary sector.

The NHS has now agreed to the use recommendations from the LINK's report in the local dementia strategy implementation plan, ensuring that people with dementia and their carers have a higher quality of life.

LINK Team Leader Jonathan Appleton comments:

"It is essential that people with dementia, their carers and families receive the best standard of care available. We're delighted that the report has had such a positive response and hope that local people will enjoy the benefits of better services."

The report has recently received local and regional press coverage in both the Hull Daily Mail and Yorkshire Post. To see the article that was published in the Yorkshire Post, please visit:

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/localnews/Care-shakeup-as-city-prepares.6187731.jp>

*Source: NHS Hull

Forthcoming Events & Training

Diary
Date

Hull LINK Public Event
'Hospital Transport and Car Parking - Have Your Say'
10am - 2pm, Friday 7th May 2010
Queen Victoria Square, Hull.

Diary
Date

If you've ever had difficulties...

- ◆ Getting to and from Castle Hill and Hull Royal Infirmary by bus, car or other forms of transport.
- ◆ Using car parking facilities at both hospitals.
- ◆ Accessing NHS transport services.

...you can help us improve services at the LINK's 'Hospital Transport & Car Parking Event'.

Hull LINK are investigating hospital transport services and will call for change based on feedback from local people.

To 'have your say' on the day, simply visit our bus and talk to a LINK team member for a few minutes. It's a quick, easy way to make your opinions count.



Dementia Awareness Course

9:30am - 4:30pm, Friday 30th April 2010.

Holderness Grange, Birch Tree Drive, Drapers Lane, Hedon, HU12 8FH.

NHS

East Riding of Yorkshire

The aim of this course is to give carers a better insight into this condition which will enable them to understand and cope with some of the behaviours and emotions of the person with dementia. For more information or to book a place, please contact Janet McDougall, Public Health Lead, NHS East Riding of Yorkshire on 01482 672041, or email janet.mcdougall@erypct.nhs.uk.

Hull & East Yorkshire World Cup

9:30am - 4:30pm, Saturday 22nd May 2010.

Hull University Sports ground, Inglemire Lane, Hull.



WORLD CUP
HULL & EAST YORKSHIRE

What is hoped to be the start of a series of annual festivals celebrating the unique ethnic mix of Hull and East Yorkshire, this celebratory event will be centred around a football tournament contested by 16 national teams, each representative of a national community that is resident in the city and region. The event aims to provide assistance to the city's health agenda, including the reduction of obesity rates and improvement in cardio vascular health, and will include a range of other activities showing off the region in terms of its cultures, its cuisine and its people. Everyone is welcome to turn up on the day and share the fun.

In the News

New Patients Rights In Force



From 1st April 2010, patients have the legal right to start treatment by a consultant within 18 weeks of GP referral and to be seen by a specialist within two weeks of an urgent GP referral for suspected cancer. If this doesn't happen, the NHS will be legally obliged to take all reasonable steps to offer them a range of alternative providers.

The maximum waiting times have been added to the NHS Constitution following last year's consultation on new patient rights. Over 8,000 people responded to the consultation, with 87% in favour of the legal rights to maximum waiting times being introduced.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham said; 'The NHS Constitution gives patients the right to get the services that they are entitled to, and the power to challenge the NHS where it does not deliver.'

In addition, 78% supported the right to an NHS Health Check every five years for all those eligible aged 40-74 to assess their risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. From 1st April 2012, everyone eligible within the age group will have the legal right to an NHS Health Check every five years.

The consultation also received support for future rights on evening and weekend access to GPs, access to NHS dentistry, and the right to key diagnostic tests for patients suspected of having cancer within one week of seeing a GP, with an interim milestone of two weeks.

Building the National Care Service



The Government has this month published the White Paper 'Building a National Care Service' that sets out their proposals to build a comprehensive National Care Service for all adults in England with an eligible care need that is free when they need it.

Through the Big Care Debate, the Government has consulted on various ways of establishing a National Care Service. As a result of the views of the public, this White Paper commits the Government to a National Care Service in which everyone is protected against the costs of care and in which no one needs to lose their home or their savings to meet these costs.

The necessary consensus on how people should pay into such a system has not yet been reached. A National Care Service Commission, will therefore be established to advise Ministers on the fairest and most sustainable way for people to do so.

This new National Care Service will be one of the biggest changes to the welfare state since the creation of the NHS. To manage the impact on the public finances, and to ensure that it is affordable and sustainable, the National Care Service will be built in stages. This is also in recognition of the significant changes that will be required to the system to make the vision of the National Care Service a reality.

For more information at to view the White Paper, visit:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Pressrel/easesarchive/DH_114951

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Spring Forum

We held our latest forum on 29th March 2010 at the Albemarle Music Centre. The event was well attended with over 50 guests, and it was great to see so many new people to the LINK. The event featured presentations from Epilepsy Action and the Patient Transport Commissioning Lead for NHS Hull. There was also a workshop session for attendees to have their say on our latest priorities as well as provide suggestions for futures priorities too. Over 90 surveys were completed demonstrating what a great opportunity these forums are for the public to share their views.

Yorkshire LINKs Ambulance Conference

On 11th March 2010, Hull LINK along with representatives from the 12 other Yorkshire LINKs attended a joint conference with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service. As the Ambulance Trust covers such a wide area and has 13 different LINKs feeding in issues, the aim of this event was to determine how we can most effectively work together, particularly on common areas of concern.

The conference was also attended by the Trust's Chairman, Chief Executive and also a number of Service Directors, demonstrating the importance the Trust places on LINKs in obtaining service users views.

Hull LINK obtained valuable information that will feed into the new Transport priority, and as a result of the conference, measures are now being put into place for a more unified approach to tackling regional issues.

Join the LINK!

If you have friends or family members who may be interested in the LINK please point them in our direction! It's free to sign up and all that's needed is to fill in our membership form, available from our office or online at www.hull-link.org.uk.

If you're involved in a group that would like to hear more about the LINK do get in touch. Groups and organisations can register as LINK members too, and we can arrange to visit your meeting or event to explain our work and gather people's views.



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Hull CVS Ltd is the host organisation for the Hull LINK



Hull CVS

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