

# Hull LINK News



Issue 14  
September 2010

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

## HealthWatch: New Consumer Health Champion

The government has put forward new plans for LINKs to be transformed into local HealthWatch, a new independent consumer champion for health and social care.

Described in the proposals as a 'citizens' advice bureau for health and social care', local HealthWatch will build on the current work of LINKs but will have a wider role, including:

- ◆ Advocacy service for people making complaints.
- ◆ Information and signposting to help people make choices about services.

Hull LINK is running a major consultation on plans for the new HealthWatch - see page 2 for more information.

## Hospital Transport: Improvements Pledged

Local services have pledged improvements to hospital transport and car parking following the LINK's report on these issues earlier this year.

As reported in the last issue, we called for improvements in a number of areas including the Patient Transport Service, public transport, car parking at local hospitals and also information for the public on transport options.



Services have now responded with details of actions, some already underway, to improve the areas we highlighted. Turn to page 3 for more information.

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[www.hull-link.org.uk](http://www.hull-link.org.uk)

**LINK**  
**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

## LINKs to Become Local HealthWatch in 2012

The government's health white paper, 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' includes plans for a major transformation of the NHS in England.

As well as planning major changes to how services are planned, the government wants LINKs to transform into local HealthWatch from April 2012.

Described in the consultation document as 'a citizen's advice bureau for health and social care', local HealthWatch will build on the work of LINKs and other patient groups by:

- ◆ Providing complaints advocacy services for people unhappy about their treatment.
- ◆ Helping people make choices about their treatment and care by providing information and signposting.
- ◆ Reporting concerns about local services to HealthWatch England, a new national body at the Care Quality Commission.

Local HealthWatch will still do the current work of LINKs, including:

- ◆ Finding out what people think of local services.
- ◆ Investigating issues of concern.
- ◆ Making recommendations to improve services.

HealthWatch England will be set up as an independent part of the Care Quality Commission, the health and care regulator.

HealthWatch England will use evidence from local HealthWatch to identify concerns about poorly performing services. It will also provide support and leadership to LINKs as they become local HealthWatch.

Local HealthWatch will also need to work closely with key bodies such as local authorities and GP consortia to ensure local people's voices are heard as services are planned and delivered.

The Government is inviting people to give their views on the plans up to early October, so Hull LINK is running a major consultation to ensure local people can take part. It's very important that we get your views on how the new service should work.

Ways to have your say:

- ◆ Come to one of our free consultation events - see page 7.
- ◆ Fill in the survey enclosed with this issue.
- ◆ Or fill in our online survey on our website - see the 'Have Your Say' page.

## Hospital Transport - Improvements Already Underway

Our investigation earlier in the year saw our biggest response to date. We made recommendations based on your feedback and local services have pledged to make improvements as a result. The following highlights some of the changes already underway.

### Patient Transport Service

NHS Hull and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service are now working together to reduce the delays reported across the service. Measures that have been taken so far include: the development of new screening questions that will ensure only eligible patients are using the service, the implementation of a new system that allows hospital staff to book transport for patients as soon as they complete their appointment, and a new booking system with separate telephone lines for staff, patients and cancellations. Already the average waiting time to connect to the booking system has been reduced from over 13 minutes to under 30 seconds.

### Car Parking

A least 20 short stay parking bays will be created at Hull Royal Infirmary which will allow cars to park outside the hospital for 30 - 40 minutes, enabling people to pick up and drop off friends or relatives without charge. In addition Castle Hill Hospital will create 200

extra car parking spaces within the next two to three months. The hospital trust has also pledged to conduct an audit of the disabled parking provision with a view to increasing and upgrading it as necessary.

### Information

The hospital trust has already updated their website to include all necessary transport information as recommended in the LINK report, and the council and ambulance service have pledged to provide better information on their websites also. The local NHS Trusts are also developing an information resource that will provide patients with full details of available transport options along with their costs and eligibility criteria.

### Public Transport

Hull City Council, local bus operators and now the local NHS Trusts have committed to working together through a Quality Bus Partnership which, when fully established, will consider the possibility of jointly funding some of the currently underserved routes.

Hull LINK will monitor progress on all recommendations and will keep members informed via future newsletters.

## Hearing Impairments Update

Work is well underway with our investigation into communication support at health appointments for people with hearing impairments. Through colleagues at the Hull Deaf Institute we've been able to find out many people's experiences of how well their needs are being met. There is still time to give us your views on this, so if you or any family members have experiences to share of getting help with communication, good or bad, please visit our website or contact us.

## Alcohol Services Report to be Published

As we go to press work is nearing completion on the LINK's report into alcohol services in Hull. Nearly 70 people who had used treatment or support services gave us their views, and we were also able to talk to staff and volunteers at a number of groups that work with service users.

Feedback on current services was largely positive, with users saying they would like improvements in: aftercare and ongoing support; more support whilst waiting to access treatment; and more local treatment services.

Our report will include a full analysis of the feedback received and key recommendations to improve services, based on what people told us they'd like to see.

## Eating Disorder Services Update

Work is also nearing completion on the LINK's report into eating disorder services. Respondents reported a number of issues with local service provision with people highlighting a need for:

- ◆ Greater awareness of eating disorders among health practitioners.
- ◆ Clearer referral pathways and shorter waiting times for treatment.
- ◆ Access to a dietician for guidance and advice.
- ◆ A specialist local eating disorder unit or day care centre.

Some of the changes people would like to see have already been implemented or are underway. Our report will illustrate the current service provision as well as recommending further improvements that people would like to see.

## Hospital Discharge - Response to LINK Recommendations

We can now report a number of important developments following publication of our Hospital Discharge report. Over 100 people and groups gave us their feedback on this key issue.

In response Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust has told us:

- ◆ The main policy covering hospital discharge is being reviewed, with key targets introduced on bed management, reducing length of stay and reducing delays.
- ◆ Staff training to include improved communication will be developed by December, and our findings on this have been circulated to all staff.
- ◆ A number of new methods will be trialled to reduce waiting times for medication from the hospital pharmacy.
- ◆ Information on help for patients in the community will be updated and circulated around the trust.

We'll be monitoring progress on this key issue in the coming months.

## Maternity Services - Survey Findings

The findings of our recent survey into maternity services have now been compiled into a report and submitted to local NHS service providers. 95 people completed the survey and the majority of respondents reported that they had received either a good or excellent service during pregnancy. The main areas that people would like to see improvements in are:

- ◆ An increased provision of antenatal classes.
- ◆ Having a named midwife throughout pregnancy.
- ◆ More support and contact time with staff during their stay in hospital.
- ◆ More support with breastfeeding when in hospital and after returning home.



NHS Hull have welcomed the report and have informed us that they have commissioned a number of support services to address the areas of antenatal classes, breastfeeding support and having a named midwife. With regards to contact time whilst in hospital, NHS Hull has asked the Maternity Services Liaison Committee to conduct a review of this part of the service. We will monitor the progress with this review and will keep members updated in future issues.

## Local News

### A Regional Neurological Alliance for Hull



Hull LINK is working with Parkinson's UK to create a Regional Neurological Alliance (RNA) for Hull. This will bring together groups working on neurological conditions (such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and muscular dystrophy) to work together to improve services.

The Neurological Alliance is a national campaigning organisation which acts as the collective voice of over 50 brain and spine charities, and works with member groups to campaign for better services for the eight million people in England who live with a neurological condition.

RNA's, which already exist in other areas, provide a united voice to ensure the voice of service users is heard locally.

A number of people in our area are interested in forming a RNA in Hull. Lynda Poole is the lead for this work in our area and would like to meet with other people interested in forming a RNA for Hull.

If you are interested in this important work contact either Hull LINK, or Lynda Poole on 0844 225 3633 / [lpool@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:lpool@parkinsons.org.uk)

## Forthcoming Events

### Travelling Towards a Better Future - Gypsy and Traveller Conference

**9:00am - 3:30pm, Tuesday 28th September 2010.**

**The Octagon Centre, Walker Street, Hull, HU3 2RA.**

Conference exploring health issues for gypsy and traveller communities. Costs apply, or free to gypsy and traveller community members.

Contact Amy Mathers on 01482 441002 ext 235 or [amy@ourcomms.org](mailto:amy@ourcomms.org)

### Living Well With Dementia in Hull

**10:00am - 3:30pm, Thursday 30th September 2010.**

**Kingston Suite, KC Stadium, Hull, HU3 6HU.**

Hear about progress in improving dementia services, and share your own experiences.

Contact Louise Woodward on 01482 585166 or [Alderson.resourcecentre@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:Alderson.resourcecentre@hullcc.gov.uk)

### 'Your Choice Your Voice' Participatory Budgeting Event for West Hull Residents

**10:00am - 2:00pm, Monday 11th October 2010.**

**The Community Enterprise Centre, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU5 2DH.**

An opportunity for local people to decide how to allocate part of the NHS public health budget.

Contact Gillian Cavanagh on 01482 344332 or [westlocality@hullpct.nhs.uk](mailto:westlocality@hullpct.nhs.uk)

# 'Building on Success'



## Public Consultation: Transforming LINKs into Local HealthWatch

Government plans propose local HealthWatch to be a 'citizens' advice bureau' for health and social care. It's vital to get local people's views on how the new local HealthWatch should work. Come along to one of our free events to have your say:

Tuesday 14th September, 1pm - 4pm  
(Registration and coffee at 1:00pm, event starts 1:30pm)  
Thursday 16th September, 5pm - 8pm  
(Registration and buffet at 5:00pm, event starts 5:30pm)  
The Octagon, Walker Street, Hull, HU3 2RA.



To book a place please complete the following sections and return it to:  
**FREEPOST RSJL-TTUB-JKCG, Hull LINK, Hull CVS, Hull, HU3 1XL**  
or email [link@hull-cvs.co.uk](mailto:link@hull-cvs.co.uk)

Please indicate which event you would like to attend:

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1pm – 4pm

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September, 5pm – 8pm

Name: .....

Address:.....

Telephone Number:.....

Email:.....

Do you have any special dietary requirements?

*(Please note food served at evening event only)*

No  Yes  (please specify).....

Do you have any other requirements:

No  Yes  (please specify).....



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