

# Hull LINK News



Issue 17  
May 2011

**Welcome to the latest news bulletin from Hull LINK, the City's Local Involvement Network for Health and Social Care. We can help you improve local services**

## Local Involvement Network Statement from Hull City Council

Have you got views about health or social care services?

Hull City Council is pleased to confirm that Hull CVS Ltd will continue as the host organisation for Hull's Local Involvement Network up to the 31st March 2012.

The Local Involvement Network is a vital way of individuals and community organisations being able to get involved in how health and social care services are provided.

Hull LINK is already established with over 1,100 members made up of individuals, and voluntary and community organisations. Hull CVS Ltd, will continue to work with the members of the Local Involvement Network to get a wide range of people and organisations involved in the health and social care issues.

For more information on how to get involved, see the Hull LINK website: [www.hull-link.org.uk](http://www.hull-link.org.uk), or contact them directly on 01482 324474, email: [link@hull-cvs.co.uk](mailto:link@hull-cvs.co.uk)

## LINK Annual Report 2010-11

Every year LINKs must produce an annual report detailing their activities over the previous year. This is a key part of LINKs' duty to report back to the public on their work. This year's report has to be published by the end of June.

We'd like members' views on the content of this year's draft report

before publication. Is the report clear? Does it provide the right kind of information? Should anything else be included?

You can view the draft on our website [www.hull-link.org.uk](http://www.hull-link.org.uk) (visit the news page) and let us have your views by June 17th 2011.

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

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

## Hull LINK in 2011-12

As you'll have read on page 1, Hull CVS has been awarded a new contract to host Hull LINK in the coming year. Hull CVS is committed to continuing to provide a good service to LINK members and ensuring Hull has an effective LINK.

Like many other services, Hull LINK has been affected by the public spending cuts, and the budget for the LINK has been reduced by 69% - a cut that can't be absorbed just by making regular efficiency savings. Obviously this will have a major impact on what the LINK does and we need to be open with LINK members about this.

- Less money means the LINK won't be able to do as many investigations into priority issues as in previous years.
- There won't be the resources for many of the activities the LINK did, such as regular forums and a bi-monthly printed newsletter.
- The staff team employed to support the LINK has had to be reduced from four to one.

All of this is happening at a time of great change in health and care services, with LINKs due to become local HealthWatch next year, taking on extra powers and duties.

We'll work with everyone involved in the LINK to find ways to provide a good service within the limitations we now face. But in practice having less resources means:

- Most of our updates and communications with members will have to be done electronically rather than in print to save costs. Please let us know your email address if you don't already get emails from us.
- Consultation with members will have to be done more by methods like web surveys instead of in person at forums.
- The number of LINK reports we publish this year will be less than before.

But the key work of the LINK has to continue:

- Later in this newsletter you can read about new issues for LINK investigation and vote on your top priorities.
- We'll provide regular updates on the NHS reforms and development of HealthWatch (visit our new 'Liberating the NHS' section at [www.hull-link.org.uk](http://www.hull-link.org.uk)).
- Above all the LINK must still provide an independent voice for local people and groups to have their say about services and secure improvements.

## Access to Services for People with Hearing Impairments

A new LINK report has called for improved services for people with hearing impairments at health appointments.

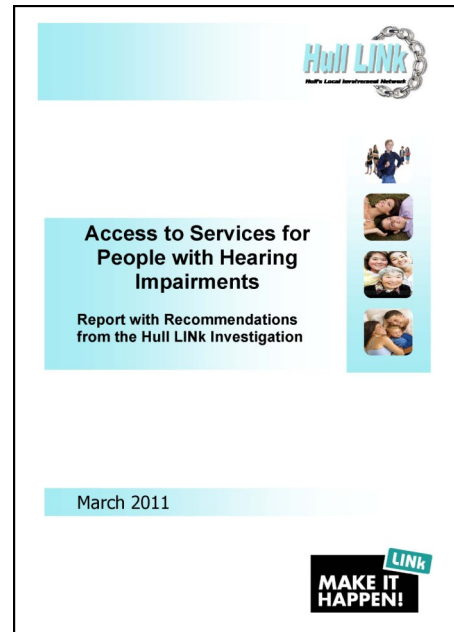
Health services have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure people with disabilities can access services, which includes the provision of communications support for people with hearing impairments. However a number of people reported that this is not always happening, leaving hearing impaired patients without the support they need.

We consulted with hearing impaired service users and workers who support them, with over 50 people having their say. The feedback we gathered showed:

- Many people were unaware of the service provider's responsibility to arrange communication support.
- There is a shortage of interpreters locally, which raises problems if support is needed at short notice.
- There appears to be a lack of deaf awareness in some health settings, resulting in miscommunication.

Based on the feedback we received our report recommends that:

- Services to develop a policy to ensure that communications support is always provided.
- Medical records to include a flag that alerts staff to the need to provide additional support.
- Alternative means of alerting patients of their appointment time to be implemented in hospital and GP waiting rooms.
- Services to consider using webcam interpreters at appointments.
- Deaf awareness training to be provided to all front line and practice staff.



## Updates on LINK Priorities:

### Mental Health Services for Young People

Our investigation into how well services for young people with mental health problems meet their needs showed that there can be problems when clients come to be transferred from children's to adults' services. This left some people feeling frustrated and unsupported at a difficult time. The Hull LINK report, published in January 2010, called for improvements in the way mental health services for children and adults work together.

We recently asked the NHS for an update on progress with this issue. Humber Foundation

Trust, which provides mental health services in our area, told us:

- The Single Point of Access service means that assessment processes have been streamlined, with staff working between different teams when necessary.
- A transition framework has been put in place for young people who need ongoing services as they move into adulthood. This can include joint care plans and planning meetings.
- The new plans also mean that young people who have been cared for out of the area can be reintegrated to local services when they return.

### Patient Transport

Hull LINK's major investigation into people's experiences of the Patient Transport Service (PTS) called for a number of improvements in punctuality, call handling and eligibility screening.

Work to deliver improvements is ongoing, with measures in place to monitor how well the service is performing and ensure health and care services work together to make things run better.

The service is now working to apply national eligibility criteria for using PTS and ensure that the service meets the needs of the people it's intended for. This will help to reduce pressures on the service and mean that eligible patients don't face delays. Patients are eligible to use PTS if:

- Their medical condition requires support from PTS staff throughout the journey.
- Their health might suffer if they were to travel by other means.
- Their condition impacts on their mobility in a way that they wouldn't be able to access healthcare without the PTS.

Alongside this services will inform people not eligible to use PTS of the alternatives open to them and other help with healthcare-related travel.

Other measures will be trialled to improve the service, including automated calls to patients before appointments to confirm their needs, and PTS using local authority transport during quiet periods to increase capacity.

## Dementia Services

Dementia has long been an issue of concern to people involved with the LINK. People told us they wanted to see more training for people working with people with dementia; more information and awareness; more choice and control for service users; and better partnership working to improve services.

Recent work in Hull to implement the priorities of the National Dementia Strategy includes:

- An awareness campaign in the media, and local events.
- Plans to give people access to earlier diagnosis of dementia, meaning they can get help sooner.
- A new Admiral Nurse Service, provided through Humber Foundation Trust, to support patients and carers.
- A new community geriatrician post to work with patients in hospital and in the community.
- A working group which is reviewing the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication to people with dementia. There has been concern that these drugs are over-prescribed.
- Introducing a 'stepped care' approach to dementia, meaning people can get help at different levels in line with their needs.

## Hospital Discharge

### Action taken on discharge delays

In July 2010 Hull LINK reported local people's concerns with hospital discharge to the NHS and Hull City Council. Over 100 individuals and groups gave us their views. As a result of the Hospital Discharge report services agreed to:

- Improve communication with patients and carers.
- Reduce delays in discharge including waiting times for medication.
- Carry out better assessments of patients care needs.

We have recently received a progress update from Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust about work they have

undertaken to improve hospital discharge.

### Delays and Assessments

- New joint policies have been agreed to reduce delays. Training sessions are taking place to ensure that nurses understand the new policies and when the necessary patient communications need to be made.

- The Hospital Trust has developed new nursing documentation with social services and intermediate care teams. This includes a 'screening tool' to be used on admission which will identify patients who are likely to need ongoing support. The aim is to help nursing staff make suitable arrangements for that patient's discharge and

therefore reduce delays.

### Medication

- 'Robotic dispensing' will be introduced. This is a computerised system of dispensing medication which means patients receive their medication in a faster time and also reduces the risk or dispensing errors.

- A computerised Prescription Tracking System has also been introduced so that staff can monitor any delays and ensure that patients receive medication in a timely fashion.

- Patients will receive better quality information relating to medication on their Immediate Discharge Letters (IDL's).

## News in Brief

### HealthWatch Update

The legislation which proposes to set up HealthWatch as a new independent champion for patients has now been delayed for a further 'listening exercise' (see news story elsewhere in this newsletter).

Key features of HealthWatch as set out in part 5 of the Health and Social Care Bill:

- HealthWatch will keep the functions of LINKs as well as gaining extra functions such as providing information and signposting.
- Local HealthWatch organisations will have a number of duties to report to the public on their work, including publishing accounts and annual reports.
- Local authorities are to be responsible for commissioning HealthWatch, and also have a duty to provide independent advocacy for complaints.

The Department of Health has published a HealthWatch Transition Plan which sets out its vision for HealthWatch and outlines what is being put in place to support transition. You can read the document at [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_125582](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_125582)

Don't forget to  
vote for your  
Priority Issues

### HealthWatch Programme Board Advisory Group

Hull LINK members were invited earlier this year to vote for a Yorkshire and Humber regional representative to attend meetings of this group, which advises the national HealthWatch Programme Board which is drawing up plans to implement HealthWatch.

Jim Kerr of Leeds LINK was elected by the LINKs in our region to be their representative. The last meeting of the group on 15 March discussed the Health and Social Care Bill, the HealthWatch Programme Board and a vision statement for HealthWatch. You can read the full record of the meeting at <http://www.hull-link.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/HealthWatch-Advisory-Group-15.3.11.pdf>

### LINK Staffing

As explained in this newsletter, the staff team employed by host organisation Hull CVS to support the work of the LINK has had to be reduced in the light of funding arrangements. Jonathan Appleton is now the LINK Co-ordinator, whilst the other staff who used to work on the LINK have now moved on to other roles in Hull CVS. Helen Blanchard, formerly LINK Engagement Worker, is now CVS Marketing and Services Officer. George Campbell, formerly LINK Membership Engagement Officer, is now CVS Funding Advice and Development Worker. Barbara Langdale, formerly LINK Administrator, is now CVS Training and Events Administrator.

## **NHS** News in Brief

### Future of the NHS

In response to concern about the Health and Social Care bill the government has decided to delay it for two months to allow further consultation through a 'listening exercise.'

The bill proposes wide ranging reforms to the NHS in England including setting up GP consortia to plan and commission local health services. The new consultation will explore issues such as competition and patient accountability.

The NHS Future Forum has been set up to provide a channel for patient and staff opinion. More details can be found at [www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/category/working-together](http://www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/category/working-together) where you can also post comments.

### Hospital Inpatients Survey

The latest national Inpatient Services Survey results are now available. Over 66,000 people who were admitted to hospital in September 2010 to January 2011 gave their views. NHS Trusts are urged to use the results to improve patients' experience of hospital. CQC uses the results in its regulation of healthcare providers.

Key findings showed improvements in hospital cleanliness and a decline in the use of mixed sex accommodation. However more people reported long waits on arriving at hospital to be allocated a bed. You can read more about the Inpatient Services Survey and search for results on individual trusts at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

### New Web Page on NHS Reforms

Hull LINK has launched a new web page to help guide people through the current maze of reforms to the health and social care system.

The new section sets out the key changes outlined in the Bill, along with explanations of some of the new reforms including:

- GP consortia
- Health and Well Being Boards
- The NHS Commissioning Board
- HealthWatch
- Public Health reforms

To view the new web page visit [www.hull-link.org](http://www.hull-link.org) and select 'Liberating the NHS' in the left hand menu.

### Love Your Motor Free NHS Health Check

NHS Hull is offering 40-74 year olds the chance to take a FREE NHS Health Check, giving you a full health and wellbeing MOT.

The Health Check will help you understand the best way to protect yourself from developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. Free NHS Health Checks are available to people who live in Hull or who are registered with Hull GP.

For a full list of participating venues visit [www.nhshull.nhs.uk](http://www.nhshull.nhs.uk). **To book call 0800 328 4003.**

## News in Brief

### State of Care Report Published

The Care Quality Commission has produced its second annual report to parliament on the state of health care and adult social care in England. CQC reports improvements in the care system but says some areas are not improving fast enough.

The report shows that people have greater control over their care due to more choice in areas such as appointment times, choice of location of care and choice of providers. However, it notes that while more people had access to personalised services through direct payments or personal budgets, there is still a wide variation in progress across the country.

Overall there has been major improvement, including in areas that really matter to people. Waiting times for NHS Hospital treatment have

shown progress, with the percentage of admitted patients treated within 18 weeks increase up 48% to 86% between March 2007 and March 2008.

Among the areas where CQC highlight a need for improvements were hospital discharge, with as many as 40% of patients saying they were not told what danger signals to watch for after they went home from hospital. A third of patients said that doctors and nurses did not give their family all the information needed to care for them.

The full report can be downloaded at <http://www.cqc.org.uk/stateofcare2009-10.cfm>



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Vote now for your priority health and social care issues that you would like the LINK to investigate!

Complete a Voting Form or alternatively vote online at [www.hull-link.org.uk](http://www.hull-link.org.uk)

Hull CVS Ltd is the host organisation for the Hull LINK



**Hull CVS**  
*'community and voluntary services'*

**Hull Community and Voluntary Services Ltd.**

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