



Staffordshire LINK Co-ordinating Group
Friday 9th September 2011
1.00pm – 2.45pm

Attendees:

Will Taylor (Chair)
David Loades
Dave Bassett
Lynn Ashburner
Paul Jay

Apologies:

4 LINK participants

Jackie Owen (Manager)
Sue Baknak (Co-ordinator)

Kate Waterhouse (Staffordshire County Council)
Julie Thompson-Edwards (Staffordshire County Council)

MINUTES OF MEETING

Areas of Discussion	Action
1. Introductions/Apologies/Minutes of last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WT introduced himself as Chair of the Group and invited others to introduce themselves to LINK participants present.• Lynne Gammon not in attendance but no apologies received prior to the meeting.• Action points/follow-up from Minutes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Visits to George Bryant and Margaret Stanhope mental health services added to enter and view schedule.○ LA produced letter to go to NHS Trusts requesting complaints data/trends which will go out next week.• Minutes of last meeting approved.• WT advised that since the last Group meeting, Chris Welch had submitted his resignation from the Co-ordinating Group on behalf of Community Council of Staffordshire.	
2. Declarations of interest <p>None.</p>	
3. LINK Activity Update <p>JO updated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitated jointly with Stoke on Trent LINK a consultation event regarding proposed changes to mental health services at Bucknall Hospital on Wednesday 17th August 2011 feedback has been provided to North Staffs Combined Healthcare.	

- Joint enter and view visit with Stoke on Trent LINK to University Hospital of North Staffordshire took place on 19th August. Report pending.
- Enter and view visit to Littleton Ward, Cannock Hospital took place on 26th August and draft report being produced. Visit was in response to issues raised by Francis Biard, LINK participant regarding 'step-up/step-down' issues. JO will be writing to FB to provide an update.
- Meeting with Burton Hospital last week together with Derbyshire LINK and bi-monthly meetings have been arranged.
- Burton Hospital has requested a LINK representative to attend a seminar taking place on 24th October in respect of developing excellence in dementia services. DB volunteered to attend and group members agreed.
- LINK representatives undertook a walk-round of A&E and the Frail and Elderly Care Unit at UHNS on Wednesday 7th September re: patient care pathways. Report being produced.
- Full programme of enter and view activities being produced and a work plan in place up to Christmas 2011.
- Request to put forward a LINK representative for the County Adult Safeguarding Board. This is a high level strategic group who meet approx. 4 meetings per year commitment. DB volunteered and group members agreed.

DB to attend and feedback to the Group.

JO to confirm that DB will be the LINK representative on this Board.

Updates from the Group

Staffordshire County Council Health and Social Care OSC

DB attended the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provided feedback as follows:-

- OSC members attended a walk through of A&E services at UHNS looking at the redesign of flow of patients through A&E and improvements implemented by the Trust in readiness for the transfer of A&E services to the new site on 14th March 2012. New staff have been appointed. The outcome of the consultation is still awaited in respect of the major trauma services review but it hoped that the proposal to retain UHNS as a major trauma services provider will be successful. Major trauma clinical practice is changing and the Trust is in discussions with Wales/Shropshire service providers. UHNS is the only major trauma centre in the West Midlands where the helipad can be used by the air ambulance at night. It is important that the Trust's major trauma status is retained.
- The Trust are looking into arrival by ambulance at A&E figures as currently an average of 42% of patients arrive at A&E by ambulance compared to the national average of 25%.

- JO highlighted the importance of liaising with scrutiny with regard to walk throughs in order to clarify roles and avoid duplication of effort and using resources more effectively. JO has raised the issue with OSC.
- OSC have submitted a response to the North Staffs Combined Healthcare consultation.
- Julia Bridgewater, Chief Executive of UHNS gave a presentation on the interventional radiology services. A peer review has been undertaken by a professional from Oxford and no concerns have been discovered but there does appear to be a cultural problem within the department.
- Carers Consultation – feedback provided by Commissioning Manager – 13% response rate to the consultation. Main concerns raised was lack of respite care available and the pressure that carers are under. JO advised that the LINK submitted a response to the consultation following discussions with the Carers Association as they felt in a difficult position as contracted to provide services and so didn't respond directly. JO met with Jenny Watson yesterday and a joint meeting with the Carers Association, LINK, Mencap and other organisations involved with carers is being arranged with the county council to discuss the carers strategy and help develop proposals for carers services. Feedback also received was that the consultation was too complex both in terms of the questions relating to strategy and policy.
- Further public accountability sessions are being arranged for North Staffs Combined Healthcare, Burton Hospital, Stafford Hospital and South Staffs and Shropshire Healthcare FT.
- South Staffs PCT are holding an event on 5th October based around "continence care" where interested parties across the local health economy can come and discuss how improvements can be made to the care provided both in terms of clinical quality and cost effectiveness.
- DB to provide written feedback report.

Item to go onto LINK website.

Cannock Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- DL is currently attending the Cannock Health Scrutiny Sub-Committees on behalf of the LINK as an interim measure and will provide a feedback report. The Group agreed an article should be put in the next LINK Bulletin seeking a LINK representative from the Cannock area to attend future meetings.

Article to go into LINK Bulletin.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- DL attended the meeting and provided feedback. North Staffs Combined Healthcare gave a presentation regarding the consultation in respect of reconfiguration of mental health service provision. DL to provide a report.

Updates from the Group continued...

HealthWatch

- WT advised that he and JO had met with Kate Waterhouse (strategic lead for HealthWatch from Staffordshire County Council) regarding transition planning for HealthWatch and the requirement to assess the effectiveness of the LINK and how this might be undertaken eg. surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews. KW will be providing a more detailed update at item 5 of the agenda.

Update on Co-option of Co-ordinating Group members

- JO confirmed that a letter was sent out to all LINK participants on the database advising them of the Co-option opportunity and to contact the LINK Support Team for information/application pack if interested. The closing date was the 31st August and 6 applications have been received. The interview date scheduled was 16th September and Elaine Robinson (Stone CAB Trustee) had agreed to attend as an independent observer of the process however 3 of the applicants cannot make the 16th. What would the Group like to do? Preference for one event that all applicants can make. DL suggested Tuesday 11th October onwards.

JO to confirm a date with the applicants and Elaine Robinson and advise Group members of the date.

4. Finance and Audit Update

- WT drew attention to the latest spreadsheet of expenditure for the LINK noting that spend to date is c. £65,000 which is staff, rent, LINK Development workers, consumables, printing.
- WT gave an update on the Audit process. The internal audit was carried out by the County Council by the end of May 2011 and agreement that KPMG would do an independent assessment of the audit took some time for SCC to finalise which caused a delay. The independent assessment by KPMG has now taken place and we are advised that the final Audit report should be available by the end of next week. We are advised that no major issues have been raised but will see the outcome once the report is received. The Audit report will be available on the LINK website in due course.
- WT advised that the DH have sent out a consultation document in respect of proposals for funding allocations for HealthWatch containing two options for consideration based on rather complex formula calculations. The document will go on the LINK website with notification going into the LINK Bulletin as well seeking public feedback. The closing date for the consultation is 24th October 2011.

5. HealthWatch – Kate Waterhouse

- KW introduced herself and advised that she is the Head of Customer Insight and Research, Customer Services and Communications working with Wendy Thompson (Staffordshire Observatory) and is the strategic lead for HealthWatch from the county council working with Ian James

and Jackie McKinley. The Engaging Communities Project also forms part of her portfolio.

- Operating Framework documents for community engagement in PCTs/Clinical Commission Groups have been issued by the DH and there are 3 pilots looking at options for how community engagement could be undertaken going forward: Stafford Hospital, NHS North Staffordshire and the Engaging Communities Project. For the sake of clarity, the Engaging Communities Project and transition/implementation of HealthWatch are two separate streams of activity.
- HW – as part of the transition plan an evaluation of the LINK as it exists; what it has achieved; its journey; strengths development/networks established will be undertaken.
- A consultation on what HW should look like in Staffordshire will also be undertaken from January/March 2012 and this will also be helpful in development the specification for the delivery of HW in Staffordshire to support the county council's commissioning process.
- Julie Thompson-Edwards is attending a regional HW meeting in Birmingham this morning where various questions have been submitted and it is hoped that JTEd will be able to feedback under item 6 of this meeting.
- In respect of the Engaging Communities Project, a meeting of the Strategic Group for the project is taking place on Monday 12th September. Principles of the project are broadly the same but need to explore what can we do differently – complaints/transparency – link data to customer insight and do the principles remain valid. Consultation on the proposals will be undertaken to establish how people would want their complaints to be handled/processes/independent organisation/how that gets communicated.
- Second piece of work also being undertaken on how the HW Pathfinder will inform how the two streams of activity could fit together.
- Questions from the Group:
 - **Q:** Is the trading date for the new company still 1st January 2012? **A:** This will be discussed at the meeting on 12th September.
 - **Q:** It is imperative that HW is a completely independent organisation. **A:** This will be considered as part of the local authority's consultation and commissioning specification process.
- WT advised that the LINK is looking at its own transition 'fit for purpose' review recognising the work done and achievements made to date as well as looking forward to a state of readiness for HW.
- Discussion/decision to be made in respect of a LINK/county council joint response to the funding allocations consultation or whether separate submissions are to be made. Closing date for consultation responses is 24th October 2011.

KW/WT/JO

6. Julie Thompson-Edwards – update from regional LINK/HealthWatch meeting.

JTEd attended a regional LINK/HW meeting on 9th September and provided the following feedback and responses to questions which had been submitted prior to the meeting:

- Uncertainty of PCT PALS funding levels for signposting activities which are being transferred to HealthWatch. Figures in consultation document for funding allocations are illustrative only at this stage.
- Keeping HW/complaints advocacy separate.
- Discussions taking place with Department of Education in respect of inclusion of signposting re: children's services and children's social care services being included in HealthWatch remit.
- HW will be bodies corporate and must employ their own staff.
- The Reform Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in May/June 2012. The date for implementation of HealthWatch is still October 2012.
- NHS Future Forum recommendations.
- Key activity for HW is to engage with 'hard to reach' groups and communities who are seldom heard.
- Duty on providers/commissions to be included in the legislation to have due regard to recommendations from HW.
- Concerns raised over independence of HW due to funding being allocated from local authorities. Many LINKs have seen budget cuts in 2011/12.
- Timeline for implementation of HW is still October 2012 and the 2007 Act is still in force until that date.
- Procurement guidance – none currently, this to be a local decision.
- Task/finish groups of the HW Advisory Committee are looking a core specifications for HW which will be shared in due course.
- Challenges: continuity/gaps in service; engagement/public voice/feedback.
- Health and Wellbeing Boards – role of the LINK representative guidance requested. There are Health and Wellbeing pathfinders and early learning from these will be shared.
- Action learning networks to support pathfinders being established to share learning.
- 9 pathfinders in the West Midlands region.
- Guidance re: competitive tendering/procurement/commissioning HW by local authorities. Local authorities could commission HW directly or via a host organisation but it must have its own infrastructure. No national guidance about specifications and so not clear at the moment.
- Data sharing issues re: sub-contracting arrangements by HW.
- Birmingham CVS have been appointed the new host organisation for Birmingham LINK from 1st October 2011.

- Stoke, Dudley, Birmingham LINKs are conducting consultation events with proposed models for HW to be considered.
- JTEd advised that if anyone had any questions they would like her to submit to the meetings going forward, please let her know. The meetings take place every 2 months.

7. AOB

None.

8. Any Questions

- No questions submitted prior to the meeting.
- Questions raised at the meeting
 - **Q:** Bill Alcock – attended the consultation in respect of service reconfiguration for mental health services in North Staffordshire and Bucknall Hospital and felt that the Trust had already made their decisions irrespective of the outcome of the consultation. How does the Group feel about this?
 - **A:** DL advised that this was raised at the Newcastle-under-Lyme Health sub-committee and David Pearson was asked to come and be answerable and gave the same response. However, the LINK can challenge and scrutinise the change/transition arrangements eg. day service closures by South Staffs PCT – due to challenges made, the transition process was revised to a phased approach. The LINK must look at achieving some impact on the changes/implementation of changes. If issues are raised the service provider/commissioner must respond and the LINK can delay the implementation of changes as they have the power to refer issues to the Secretary of State via the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Can influence the how if not the yes/no it is going to happen. JO advised it is also about holding people to account – Bucknall hospital proposals are based on a pilot but there was no evidence/figures to back up the proposals so holding the Trust to account.
 - **Q:** Tim Ridgely – concerned that there is little monitoring of patients with brain trauma, stroke, epilepsy, etc. and gave background details to his concerns regarding incorrect figures/outcomes since 2009. 480 people discharged from Wolverhampton, UHNS, Stafford/Cannock since 2009 without a discharge care pathway/review being done and carers are bearing the brunt of this care giving as pathways are not being reviewed for continuing care provision. TR gave examples of his own experiences of stroke services/care between New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, Stafford Hospital and UHNS. Following reviews in legislation in 2002 a formula/tariff system to be applied for discharge following a major brain trauma was implemented but this is not being applied which means that costs of up to £35m which should have been met by the DH have been paid for by

the county council as social services are intervening because patients are being discharged too early and without a planned review. Social workers are requesting patient reviews but this is not happening. TR asked if the LINK could ask the hospitals to follow the DH care pathway for discharge/continuing care and that conditions which patients arrive with are accurately recorded. TR is dealing with his own concerns/complaints but would like the LINK to look into these issues and monitor and audit the service providers and challenge the system.

- **A:** JO confirmed that these issues would be taken up by the LINK and that she would be in contact with TR to discuss the matter further and for TR to provide whatever information to JO he feels is relevant to pursuing this.

**Meeting closed. Next meeting Friday 14th October 2011.
Please note the start of this meeting 10.30am and the venue is Dove Room, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council offices, Stockwell Street, Leek.**