



Gateshead LINK

Representatives Handbook

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1. REPRESENTATIVES' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We value your commitment to the role of representative of Gateshead LINK and appreciate that you give your time freely. However, there are certain things that you must undertake in order to be effective as a LINK rep.

- Be committed to the aims and objectives of Gateshead LINK
- Represent the views of Gateshead LINK rather than your own personal views, or those of your own organisation
- Liaise, consult and work with LINK staff on matters under discussion at relevant meetings
- Develop an understanding of the Health and Social care needs of Gateshead residents
- Report back to the LINK through whatever process the LINK decides, e.g. reports, newsletter articles, events and meetings
- Liaise with LINK staff and LINK members about issues that impact on the work of LINK
- Adhere to the values of accountability, honesty and openness of Gateshead LINK
- Identify in discussion with LINK staff your training needs in relation to the issues and processes involved in the LINK
- Attend Gateshead LINK meetings and any additional sub-group meetings that may be needed, in order to update LINK members on developments or issues that have been raised in meetings attended
- Report to the LINK staff any meetings that you wish to attend on behalf of LINK before attending the meeting

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

The LINK *Code of Conduct and Ground Rules for Meetings* aims to enable all representatives of Gateshead LINK to behave in an acceptable and professional manner. (*Appendix 1: LINK Policies*)

Relationships should be based on mutual respect, honesty and openness with, at all times, the good name of the LINK being paramount.

The Code makes a clear statement as to what is acceptable and the level of conduct expected from all reps.

2.1 GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

At all times the reputation and interests of the LINK are paramount and Reps will not act against the interest of the LINK ,either individually or as part of any group

Reps will, at all times, act in a courteous manner in all matters concerning the LINK

3. MEETINGS

Everyone entitled to attend any meeting on behalf of the LINK will be informed of the date and time of the meeting at least 7 days in advance wherever possible

Equal opportunities and accessibility will be taken into account by LINK staff when they are arranging venues for LINK business

Agendas and minutes of previous LINK meetings will be circulated at the same time as the notice of the next LINK meeting is sent out.

All LINK meetings will be recorded through minutes and these will also be made available on the LINK website as well as in hard copy.

Any items not on the agenda can be raised under Any Other Business

Major items should be raised with LINK staff in advance of meetings with a view to being included on the agenda

All meetings will be chaired by a member of the LINK and will be conducted in a fair and open manner.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Gateshead LINK reps must sign up to the above Code of Conduct which states that they will declare any personal interest which might conflict with or be seen by others to affect their ability to perform their duties fairly and impartially

All reps must declare any conflict of interest in any business being discussed at any meeting. (*Appendix 1: LINK Policies Declaration of Interest*)

5. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN REPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OR GROUPS WITHIN THE LINK

No statement to the media, either written or verbal, will be made on behalf of the LINK without proper authorisation from the Chair.

All written correspondence on behalf of the LINK reps role will require authorisation from the Chair. The need for such correspondence may arise through the Rep's delegated role

6. REPRESENTATIVES' PROTOCOLS

In order to be fully representative of the LINK it is a requirement that representatives:

- Attend their delegated LINK meetings
- Attend pre-meetings with the LINK staff to go through relevant papers and discuss the LINK response to any items on the agenda
- Attend relevant LINK task group meetings
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Representatives will have the full support of the LINK , whose members appreciate that events do occur that may make it difficult to attend relevant meetings on its behalf. However, it must be understood that taking on the role of LINK representative is a commitment and that meetings must be attended and feedback given.

If representatives are unable to attend meetings they must inform LINK staff. Continued non-attendance of meetings without explanation could result in being asked to step down as a LINK representative.

LINK staff undertake to:

- Provide help and support to the representatives to ensure that they are able to carry out the role in an informed and confident manner
- Hold pre-meetings with representatives to ensure that LINK issues are raised at relevant meetings and all papers are pre-read
- Contact reps after meetings for feedback as necessary
- Keep representatives up to date with any new developments as they arise
- Pay expenses on time, subject to completion of expenses claim forms.
- In the event of a link rep being unable to attend a meeting and no other suitable rep being available LINK staff will attend meetings for information purposes only. They will not be fulfilling a LINK representational role.

7. LINK TASK GROUPS

Task Groups are in development

8. LINK EXPENSES POLICY

Gateshead LINK Travelling and Subsistence Allowances Policy Statement

1. The following allowances apply to people attending LINK Steering Group and Task Group meetings, LINK public events and members of the LINK who have been mandated to attend other events, forums and networks on behalf of the LINK.
2. In all cases the LINK will reimburse the cheapest form of transport unless the LINK has approved claimants transport requirements in advance.
3. Where people have Concessionary Travel Passes and attend any of the above LINK events during Concessionary Pass hours, then the LINK will not reimburse travel costs.
4. People who have a bus pass will be expected to use it. Those who have a free bus pass are not entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses
5. If a person is attending a LINK event on behalf of another organisation the expectation is that the organisation would reimburse their expenses. However if this is not possible then the LINK will consider their claim.
6. Wherever possible the LINK would seek reimbursement from external organisations who have requested LINK representation at forums or meetings.
7. People who attend consecutive meetings on the same day and in the same location will only be entitled to one travel claim

Travel by Rail

8. All approved rail travel on behalf of the Gateshead LINK will be on a standard second class basis. All rail travel will be arranged by the LINK administration officer subject to prior LINK approval

Travel by car

Mileage calculation and claiming

9. Mileage can be claimed on the basis of the most direct route from the departure point to the venue. The departure point will usually be from home. The current rate which can be claimed is listed below. Any changes in mileage rates will be notified to all members in writing.
10. Claimants should include enough detail of places visited on the claim form to justify the mileage claimed. This information will be kept for audit purposes.
11. People can claim the appropriate mileage rate for journeys up to 30 miles in one direction from home (that is, a 60 mile round trip)
12. People travelling more than 30 miles in one direction must get authorisation from the LINK Steering Group. They will **then** be able to claim as follows:
 - ❖ the appropriate public transport rate if travelling by car for their own convenience, or for personal reasons, to a place which can be easily reached by public transport. However people with mobility issues may claim the approved mileage rate, if public transport is not a viable option. This needs to be approved by the LINK in advance
 - ❖ the appropriate mileage rate for the round trip if accompanied by an official passenger e.g., a fellow LINK attendee . Passengers will not be allowed to claim travel expenses.
 - ❖ the appropriate mileage rate for the round trip if travelling by car results in a substantial saving in time and cost to the LINK, whether or not accompanied by an official passenger.
13. Any additional expenses such as car parking charges which people may incur whilst using their car on LINK business will be reimbursed on production of receipts/parking tickets. **Parking fines will not be reimbursed.**

Travel by Bus

14. People travelling by bus to any meetings that meet the automatic claim criteria above can claim bus fares back using the LINK Claim Form. All bus tickets **must be kept and attached** to the Claim Form for audit purposes.
15. Bus fares can also be reimbursed when a LINK member represents the LINK at an event agreed with the LINK. Claims should be submitted on the LINK Claim Form with bus tickets attached to it.

Travel by taxi

16. In circumstances where people are unable to travel by bus, car or rail, taxis may be used with prior agreement. This mode of transport may also be used when considering issues such as personal safety, late night travel, travelling alone, accessibility of venue by public transport etc

Accommodation costs

17. On occasion it may be necessary for people to stay overnight at a hotel, for example whilst attending conferences or training events as a mandated LINK representative. All accommodation will be booked in advance by the LINK administration officer and arrangements will be made for the LINK to be invoiced direct.
18. Accommodation booked and used by people without LINK prior agreement will not be reimbursed.

Subsistence Allowances

19. People will only be able to claim subsistence allowances when they have actually paid for meals. This must be approved in advance by the LINK. Allowances will not be paid when a suitable meal is provided free of charge.
20. When a subsistence allowance is claimed, journey departure and return times must be entered on LINK claim forms.
21. Lunch allowances are paid to people if they are attending both a morning and afternoon meeting on the same day and cannot return home between meetings.

22. Tea/dinner allowances are paid to people who continue to represent the LINK after 6.30pm (tea)/8.30 pm (dinner) respectively and who are not provided with a meal free of charge.
23. All claims must be authorised by the LINK Project Co-ordinator before payment can be made and must be submitted on LINK claim forms.
24. Claims may be examined in detail by GVOC's Director and auditors, and people may be asked to justify allowances claimed.

Support Costs

25. The following support costs may be claimed **subject to the prior agreement** of the LINK:
26. Reasonable administration costs for activities undertaken on behalf of the LINK will be reimbursed where there has been prior agreement, for example to cover the costs of phone calls, printing cartridges, stationary, and postage
27. Childcare and carer support services to substitute for the carer, while the carer attends a LINK meeting or event, or the carer is mandated by the LINK to represent the LINK at external networks, forums, conferences or events. (*Rates still to be determined*)
28. If an escort is required to meet the personal/social/health needs of people who wish to attend LINK meetings or events or for a person who has been mandated by the LINK to represent the LINK at external networks, forums, conferences or events. This also applies to people with Personal Assistants funded through Individual Budgets, who may require use of their allocated PA hours to attend LINK meetings etc.

This claim is designed to cover **additional hours** incurred only.
(Rates still to be determined)

Administration of Claims

29. All LINK expense claims will be dealt with by the LINK administration officer and will be approved by the LINK Project Co-ordinator.
30. All claims must be submitted using the LINK Expenses Claim Form. All expenses claims must be accompanied by the original copy of the relevant invoice, receipt, travel ticket or mileage claim form
31. Expenses will normally be reimbursed by cheque subject to the total amount of the claim. However attendance at LINK conferences, seminars and events may require people to be reimbursed on the day using petty cash.

Gateshead LINK

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The following allowances apply with effect from 1st April 2008.

Travel allowance

All cars	40p per mile
Rail	Standard 2 nd class

Subsistence Allowance

Breakfast	£5.78
Lunch	£7.99
Tea	£3.15
Evening Meal	£9.90
<i>Carers' support costs</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>PA additional costs</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Childcare costs</i>	<i>to be determined</i>

LINKs Expenses Claim Form

See Appendix 1: LINK Policies

This handbook will be regularly reviewed by Gateshead LINK
Agreed October 2008