

## **THE LINKS OPERATIONAL TASK GROUP**

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May '08 – Notes of meeting**

### **Present:**

Ian Mason	Resident
Harold Stookes	Resident
Dorothy Henley	Resident - Chair
Andi Parker	Involvement Worker, Gateshead Council - Minutes
Esther Ward	Older People's Assembly
Bill Lllewellyn	Resident
Annie Murphy	GVOC
Gev Pringle	GVOC
Dave Wallace	Voluntary Worker
Caroline Airs	GAIN
Colin Roberts	GVOC
Christine Squires	Resident

### **Apologies:**

Lyn Boyle	Planning and Development Manager, Gateshead Council
Janice Todd	Carer
Anya Simpson	Mental Health User Forum
Jane White	Peer Mentor
Kay Parker	Resident
Vicky Parsons	Older People's Assembly
Alastair White	Headway

### **1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies**

### **2. Minutes & Matters Arising of last meeting (08.05)**

- EW asked that words were spelt in full.
- CR circulated the group discussions, information written up from the last meeting.
- DH asked for the minute to be amended to say that the LINK did agree to reimburse expenses. She has also approached the Hospital regarding this matter which is likely to have a positive outcome. Further discussion on this topic agreed we need to have a clear policy on this and that if members have been invited onto other meetings that we should approach them in the first instance for expenses. AM will add to list of things to do.

### **3. Update from Governance sub group (met 20.05.08)**

DH explained that a small number of this group had met with CR this week to start working on key Governance areas. She explained they had not reached full agreement and recognise that this may be reviewed in 6months.

Aims & Objectives – CR read out the 'strapline' the working group had come up with. A number of comments were made to improve the statement and bring balance (identify best practice) and include a point about what the LINK will do with information once it is collected. We agreed we wanted to keep it simple. May need to break sentence into two. CR will amend. AM will circulate with a covering letter to everyone on database asking for comments by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June after the next Governance Group meeting on 3 June.

Decision Making – The sub group had looked at 2 models for how the LINK could operate; Traditional and Innovative. They were initially drawn to the simpler, traditional model. This would involve an elected Steering Group and we would also need to agree a process for elections onto that decision making group.

It was suggested that we already have a Steering Group and we could keep it as it is at the moment. Any new members could be part of Task Groups. After much discussion, we agreed that the Steering Group would remain open to new members, as will the Task Groups. We do want to encourage as wide a representation as possible with new members being able to become actively engaged and participate in decision making. If we start to have problems with a growing membership slowing down decision making we may need to re-visit this decision. AM/GP will 'induct' new members to the Groups.

**We also agreed that we do not need to decide now on the LINK structure.**

The sub group have brought information on the Traditional model which has been discussed. We agreed we need to show consideration of other models and options so that our decisions show transparency. A suggested model was the 'Assembly model' which the Older Peoples Assembly adopted. The Governance sub group agreed to look at other models and bring them forward for more discussion with pros and cons of each model.

Membership – The Governance sub group looked at this issue by making some suggestions to the question; "Who shouldn't be members of the LINK?" The list included Councillors, staff working for PCT, Council, deliverers or commissioners of services. After discussion we agreed that we would keep the membership open and that we would need a "Declaration of Interest" policy – AM to add to list of future tasks.

We will also need to agree, if we have Steering Group model, how the LINK membership is represented. It is apparently in one of the Guidance documents that this could be weighted 40% groups and 60% individuals. We agreed that any model should reflect our membership.

Balancing Interests – We need clear procedures for doing LINKs visits. This will be re-visited in the future. AP also pointed out that the NHS Centre for Involvement is working on Guidance now.

Everyone thanked the Governance sub-group for starting to bring these issues to the meeting for wider debate and discussion. They will meet again on 3rd June at GVOC.

#### **4. Any other Business**

- Need to set dates for future meetings. Agreed to keep Task Groups fortnightly and Steering Group monthly after June meetings. AP to set dates/book rooms.
- Dharzi consultation about new GP practices and Blaydon development will go to June 12 Steering Group. This will be the LINKs first response to a consultation document.
- PPI members to give contacts for groups and useful meetings to GVOC who will hold Register of Information.
- LINK posters circulated for information.
- LINK updates and Newsletter ready for distribution – ring Annie if people want these for distribution (tel: 478-4103)

- Thanks to Older Peoples Assembly for the gift of their old display boards

**5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June. 10am-12. Bridges Room.**  
Apologies from BL