

**Gateshead LINK
Operational Task Group**

**31st July 2008
10am – 12 noon
GVOC Meeting Room**

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Present:

Kay Parker
Dorothy Henley
Dave Wallace
Harold Stookes (Chair)
Bill Llewellyn
Alistair White
Beryl Robinson
Andi Parker
Kim Newton (Minute taker)

Apologies:

Gev Pringle
Caroline Airs
Annie Murphy
Alison McClellan
Ian Mason

Harold Stookes was nominated and accepted as Chair.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

It was noted that Andi Parker was present at the last meeting of Operational Group but not recorded on the minutes.

The Chair informed the group that the Operational Group had supported the GVOC staffing proposals at the Steering Group meeting and the situation was now resolved.

The Steering Group has also agreed the Gateshead LINK Expenses Policy and Registration forms.

The National Carers Strategy was not discussed at the SG meeting but would be revisited at a later date. It was noted this was a large

document which would need to be circulated for reading before discussion took place. It was agreed not to post the document due to high postage costs but to distribute the document to the SG prior to it being an agenda item.

3. Discipline and Complaints Policy

A number of sample versions of Discipline and Complaints Procedures were circulated and Harold requested the group took some time to read the documents before discussion.

It was agreed the "**Forum Name** Policy and Procedure for Standards of Conduct and Received Complaints" document would serve as a basis for the group to work. (See attached).

It was noted the support staff working for the project would be covered by GVOC Policy and Procedure

It was agreed the policy will have 3 subheadings:

1. Host Staff (This will refer to GVOC policies)
2. LINKs members
3. Processes and decisions

A lengthy discussion took place and the following amendments were made to the draft policy:

Gateshead LINKs

Policy and Procedure for Received Complaints

The Gateshead LINK is committed to ensuring the highest standards of conduct and performance in all aspects of its work. This applies to LINK volunteers, members of the Steering Group and Task Groups. (Herein afterwards will be referred to as Volunteers)

Where Volunteers do not meet agreed standards, it is essential to ensure that fair and appropriate action is taken.

Anyone may make a complaint about a Gateshead LINK Volunteer.

This policy aims to:

- Demonstrate the recognition of the Gateshead LINK that a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that a member of the community, or Volunteer wishes to have addressed, and is also an opportunity to improve the service.
- Ensure all complaints are treated positively, courteously and equally.
- Ensure all complaints and any action taken will be recorded and the complainant will be informed of any progress and record any action taken.

Initiating the Complaints Procedure

- The Complaints Procedure may be initiated by a written or verbal complaint to Gateshead LINK staff.

Stage 1 – Informal Action

It is intended that most issues can be resolved informally through communication, mediation and training, as appropriate. Therefore, whenever possible and with due regard to the seriousness of the issue, the LINK Project Co-ordinator will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

This will take the form of a discussion with the objective of helping the Volunteer to reach an appropriate Standard of Conduct, or resolve the particular issue which led to the problem arising. Following the discussion the Project Co-ordinator will write to those involved, summarising the action taken.

If a breach of a Standard of Conduct involves possible criminal activity informing the police should be considered.

Stage 2 – Investigation

- If an issue cannot be resolved informally, or is considered by the LINK Project Co-ordinator to be too serious to be handled informally, the next stage is a formal investigation.
- LINK officers, Chair, and Deputy Chair of the LINK will consult and letters will be sent to the complainant and the Volunteer explaining that a formal investigation will be carried out and the reasons given.

- The target is to conclude this investigation in 30 working days.
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It was agreed to stop at this point and revisit the document at the next meeting.

4. Declaration of Interest Form

This agenda item was not discussed

5. Any Other business

Andi Parker will be annual on leave at the next meeting and Lyn Boyle (Gateshead Council) will attend in her absence.

It was noted the Promotional Group were looking to develop a policy about who can be a member of the LINKs. It was decided this should be a task for the Operational Group as this a governance matter.

6. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 14th August
10.00-12.00 noon
Blaydon Room