

**Gateshead LINK
Operational Task Group**

**17 July 2008
10am – 12 noon
GVOC Meeting Room**

Minutes

Present:

Kay Parker
Dorothy Henley Chair
Gev Pringle
Dave Wallace
Caroline Airs
Harold Stookes
Ian Mason
Bill Llewellyn
Alistair White
Annie Murphy

Apologies:

Alison McClellan

1. Matters arising

Draft Code of Conduct

Copies were circulated of the draft Code of Conduct and two minor changes were made. The amended draft would be made available at the next Interim Steering Group meeting scheduled for Thursday 24 July.

Members of the Operational Group wished to record their thanks to Esther Ward for providing a copy of the *Older People's Assembly's Code of Conduct*. This had proved to be a very helpful guide to members when developing the LINKs Code of Conduct.

Gateshead Forum for People with Learning Disabilities

AM reported that she and Andi Parker had attended the above Forum on Monday 14 July on behalf of Gateshead LINK. They had distributed LINK information and encouraged people to join the

LINK either as individuals or as a group. They also informed the Forum about the planned October event. AM suggested that the LINK needs to consider designing additional promotional suitable for people with learning disabilities.

Members agreed that this task be passed onto the Promotional Task group for consideration

2. LINK staffing

Gev explained that the Council had withdrawn a contract from GVOC and redundancy notices had been served on two workers. Under employment law staff under threat of redundancy must be offered equivalent posts within the organisation if available. In this case an administrative worker and a project coordinator/development worker were involved and, by law, Gev must offer the LINKs administrative post and the forthcoming Project Coordinator post to the redundant workers.

One of these workers is Kim Newton who is already providing administrative support to the LINK and the other is Julie Mains who some LINKs members knew when she worked on the PPI project.

Gev apologised for putting the LINK in this position and explained he had discussed it fully with Annie Murphy, Alistair White and the Council. Gev also apologised for the timing of this as some budget had been spent on advertising the administrator's post before this occurred.

Gev explained that he felt these would be good and valuable appointments and agreed to raise the matter at the Steering Group on the 24th July.

The Operational Task Group endorsed the host's position and actions.

Operational Group agreed to support the proposal at the Steering Group.

Gev agreed to provide additional information to the Steering Group re: queries raised about staff probationary periods following redeployment

3. Action Plan

AM circulated copies of the updated Action Plan that reflected the tasks agreed at the last meeting.

The Action Plan was agreed by the Group

4. Expenses Policy

AP had provided a breakdown of expenses claimed to date from the Local Authority by people attending LINK's meetings and events.

A total of £272.68 has been claimed between August 2007 and July 2008.

The group proceeded to debate the parameters of a LINK expenses policy.

Two basic principles were the starting point for the discussion:

No one should be out of pocket

No one should be excluded from taking part in the LINK

It was recognised that the LINK needed to have an agreed written policy for the October event

It was agreed that the following expense categories should be reflected in the Policy

Transport costs – *car, bus, rail, taxi costs*

Support costs – *additional carer costs, childcare costs and additional Personal Assistance support costs*

Administrative costs – *printing, paper etc*

AM agreed to produce a draft expenses policy based on GVOC's existing policy. The draft would be tabled at the Interim Steering Group on Thursday 24 July.

5. LINK Registration Forms

Amendments were made to both forms. Please see attached amended copies. References to inspection/visiting services were removed as it was felt that this was implicit in the Social Care

Services Provision and Health Care Services Provision focus of the LINK.

AM agreed to contact Berni Cowen, Gateshead Council, to discuss designing versions of both forms so that they are suitable for people with learning disabilities and literacy difficulties. AM will contact BC when she returns from annual leave.

It was also noted that the LINK should produce a large print version of both forms for people with visual impairment.

The Promotional Task Group will add these tasks to their work schedule.

6. Darzi Report – Way Forward

DH raised that there a number of reports that need to be considered in more detail by the Interim Steering Group:

- i) *Our Vision, Our Future* – NHS North East Strategic Vision for transforming health and health care services within North East of England
- ii) *High Quality Care for All* - NHS Next Stage Review Final Report by Lord Darzi
- iii) National Carers Strategy

DH suggested that these reports need to be a main item on future Interim Steering Group agendas to consider their possible effects on the people of Gateshead.

It was agreed to put this suggestion at the next Interim Steering Group scheduled for Thursday 24 July and get a future date for discussion.

AM agreed to prepare a brief overview of the reports that could be presented at the agreed meetings. Copies of the reports to be discussed would be circulated in advance.

7. Any other business

i) AM circulated copies of the newly developed LINK web page that can be accessed via GVOC's main website.

ii) Annual leave – in AM and GP's absence Beryl Robinson, Deputy Director GVOC will be attending LINK meetings

iii) Start date of LINK staff – this would happen as quickly as possible

iv) The following apologies were offered for future meetings:

Bill Llewellyn 24 July Interim Steering Group and
 Promotional Group

Caroline Airs 24 July Interim Steering Group
 31 July Operational Group

8. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 31 July
10am – 12 noon
GVOC