

Hampshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) March briefing

Plans are now well underway for the procurement of a host organisation for a Hampshire LINK. Hampshire County Council has responsibility for the tender process, working closely with partners in health and the voluntary sector, and will be holding a meeting for prospective bidders in early April.

The detail of the LINK is in the process of being developed. This briefing includes some of the key facts from work to date. Further information is available from a number of organisations, listed at the end of the briefing.

What are the next steps in establishing a Hampshire LINK?

Hampshire County Council is in the process of procuring a host organisation, which will establish and manage the LINK. The host organisation will be in place before 30 September 2008. In the meantime, Hampshire County Council has a duty to provide an 'interim LINK'.

What is an 'interim LINK'?

Hampshire County Council has established an interim LINK committee, made up of representatives from the NHS, patient and public involvement forums (PPIFs), voluntary organisations in Hampshire, social care, Hampshire County Council chief executives and Help and Care. The committee will:

- Engage with the people of Hampshire so that they can begin to shape what a LINK might look like
- Start to identify governance arrangements, aims, first priorities etc with early members to pass on to the host organisation
- Act as a hub for current health and social care issues/concerns
- Assess the current work plans from the former Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIF) and pursue projects as appropriate
- Manage the budget until host organisation is in place

The first meeting of the interim LINK committee will be held in April, where further work will be undertaken. A briefing will follow shortly thereafter.

How will the NHS be held to account after 31 March 2008 with the disbanding of Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIFs)?

Hampshire PCT is very keen to ensure that the excellent work and contacts from the PPIF are not lost. It has written to all current members asking for their contact details if they want to be kept informed with Hampshire PCT's plans to create a membership scheme for the NHS in Hampshire. It has also offered to cover any expenses and help with venues, for those groups who may still wish to meet and for individuals who are lay members of other NHS groups. Any group that Hampshire PCT forms will be integrated with the Hampshire LINK.

Partners involved in the establishment of the LINK will be encouraging current PPIF members to join the LINK as soon as it is up and running.

What will this mean for social care?

The LINK will bring new opportunities for people to be involved in influencing how social care is planned and delivered, both for commissioning and operational aspects of services. The LINK will also have new rights and duties to inspect and comment on adult social care services and on any proposed changes to the delivery of services or eligibility for support.

Can PPIF members play a role in interim arrangements?

After 31 March 2008 Forums and former Forum members will no longer have statutory powers or responsibilities. Forums cannot therefore continue beyond March 2008. LINKs powers cover health and social care and it is important to bring together local people and groups from a wider perspective than Forums. People who have been involved in Forums will be able to take part in the temporary arrangements, along with others, although their status will be the same as everyone else involved. One of the aims behind LINKs is to provide more people with the chance to shape local care services. Clearly, people who have been involved in Forums will be well placed to contribute to the setting up of LINKs, but LINKs are to be formed of a much wider base.

The interim LINK will issue monthly briefings.

Further information

Hampshire County Council

www.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/as-links

The NHS Centre for Involvement

Tel: 024 7615 0705

Email: info@links.nhs.uk

www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk

A simple explanation of LINKs

www.direct.gov.uk/localinvolvementnetworks

Lessons from nine 'Early Adopter' projects around England

www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk/docs/EAPS%20final%20report.pdf

Information about Government policy

www.dh.gov.uk/patientandpublicinvolvement

The Department of Health has published documents that provide information and guidance about contracting a Host:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_077266

The Local Involvement Networks Regulations 2008

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080528_en_1

Information about Government policy

www.dh.gov.uk/patientandpublicinvolvement