

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LINK STEWARDSHIP GROUP
Held in the Conference Room HQ Building,
25th November 2010 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Joe Dunn (Vice Chair)
Peter Woodley
Gennifer Paul-Gomez
John Miskelly
Julie Paget
Lois Lloyd
Dot Throssell
Karen Morse
Vicky Shipway (LINK Support Team Manager)
Christine Breckell (Minutes)

Apologies:

Chris Boote
Geoff Marks
Dan Spry
Althea Morgan
Barry Lucas
Jake Paget
Fred Morton

Agenda Items

1. Welcome

As acting chair, Joe Dunn welcomed our guest speakers from Sentinel, Neil Parsons (Strategic Operations manager) and Helen Thomas (GP, Chair of Sentinel), and the stewardship group introduced themselves. In order that Neil and Helen were not unnecessarily delayed, it was proposed that they deliver their talk first, and other LINK business be carried out after.

Neil gave a talk which explained the ethos and structure of Sentinel, and also covered areas where LINK and Sentinel could be mutually beneficial to each other. He explained that Sentinel acted as a referral service between GP's and patients, explaining treatment options to patients so that they can make informed decisions as to where to get their treatment. Sentinel also explains options which avoid using main hospitals and using local treatment centres where appropriate, which often enables patients to obtain treatment more quickly. Sentinel generally sort appointments out for patients within 48 hours, but does have the power to refuse referrals for procedures which are no longer carried out under the remit of the NHS. He explained that time delays in patients coming back to confirm their appointments cause a bottleneck.

Neil also gave a brief overview of proposed changes to the Sentinel brief, and how they may affect the service which Sentinel currently provides. It is thought that there will be a statutory responsibility, but with a local geographic focus. It is proposed that GP's will be responsible for commissioning secondary and urgent care services, with Sentinel becoming part of the consortium, but dentistry, optical and pharmacy services will be commissioned nationally. As regards clinical commissioning, Plymouth believes in collaborative working between primary and secondary care providers, and has applied for Pathfinder status, as an early adopter of the scheme. Sentinel is in discussion with the local authority re public health and closer working practices, with more focus on prevention and on healthy life style. These are early days and more clarity is needed, but this does give an opportunity to influence and design the healthcare structure of Plymouth.

Discussion then took place concerning areas where LINK and Sentinel could work together:

Suggestions:

- LINK could provide an interface between patients and Sentinel
- Sentinel is keen to receive feedback from patients – is currently using a lot of questionnaires, but would like national clarity to help patients give feedback via internet, post or telephone. LINK could be a catalyst for service improvement in this process.
- Sentinel would like LINK to tell them what the website needs to improve access for people whose first language is not English.
- The Racial Equality Council could provide feedback via LINK, and also provide health information over the internet in other languages.
- Sentinel would like LINK assistance to make the website more public facing and more user-friendly.
- Sentinel would like a closer working relationship with LINK.
- To discuss LINK membership of the Sentinel board of directors.
- Forums to link up with to develop and explore commissioning work.
- Website development.
- Improvement in patient information.
- Sentinel would like to have two way communications with LINK.

Several of the stewards came forward with ideas covering the topics that Neil had covered as causing problems in the appointment process:

Lois suggested that more images be used on the website e.g. widget, to assist people who have problems with reading for whatever reason, to access information.

John Miskelly suggested that some time delays could be caused by patients being unable to read their mail and hear telephone calls due to being blind and deaf, or reliant on carers who only come in a couple of times a week. He suggested that Sentinel call carers direct, which Sentinel agreed to do if the GP gives those details when the referral request is made.

Julie Paget said that Sentinel needs to make clear to patients that when they make their choice for their initial consultation, that they are then bound to attend that hospital for the entirety of their treatment, as people could make choices, not thinking of travel logistics.

Also, the Sentinel switchboard needs to be fully informed re things such as disabled access, which some patients need to consider before making their choice.

John also pointed out the need to manage public expectations of service when LINK becomes HealthWatch.

Vicky offered to forward feedback to Sentinel regarding services and the communication between them. She also thought that LINK representation on the board would be beneficial to strengthen the partnership and provide a patient voice. Vicky also stressed the strength of LINK representation in BME groups, and offered to tell them about Sentinel.

Vicky and Neil are to talk at a later date about how to progress matters. Neil and Helen then left the meeting.

2. Minutes

- ★ The minutes of the meeting on 21st October 2010 were agreed, with an amendment to the part 2 section concerning the meeting held prior to that stewardship group meeting; the revision is shown under the part 2 write up further down the document.
- ★ Autism strategy – Vicky had passed on the group's concerns regarding the possible difficulties in the inclusion of an autistic representative in a formal meeting structure. She is also meeting with Lucy Skye, part of the National Autism Society of Plymouth on the implementation of the strategy.

- ★ Localities update – Vicky has made further enquiries as to when these meetings will be taking place to try and establish representation by LINK on the committees, but as yet she has heard nothing.
- ★ The cancelled meeting between Vicky and the Chair and Vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny committee has yet to be rearranged.
- ★ CQC meeting 12th January 2011 – Vicky asked which steward would like to accompany her to London – while it was agreed that a delegate should attend, no firm decision was made. As some stewards who had expressed an interest in attending had been unable to come to this meeting, it was decided to defer a final decision until the 8th December meeting, when a decision on whether to fund an overnight stay in London would also be decided. The group also discussed some costs for an overnight stay. Christine had prepared some quotes and Lois had sourced a cheaper Travel Lodge as well. Lois will send the information to Christine.
- ★ Joe Dunn reported back to the Stewardship group on the meeting he had attended in Bodmin for the User Strategy Group, which was viewed as very productive.
- ★ The stewards discussed the practicalities of paying for an events planning workshop, and decided that, in view of the strengths and experience Karen is bringing to the team, that the situation be reviewed in the New Year. Lois suggested that the stewards compile a 'Skills register' to give their strengths and expertise, to show what knowledge is available within the stewardship group. This information is to be collated.
- ★ Vicky distributed a revised 'Pin Board' document showing current and completed areas of work, and asked the stewards if they approved of the format – this was agreed.

3. Task Group Updates

Disabled access – The task group discussed John's report and recommendations. Key areas of concern e.g. signs and toilets, and which groups to approach were discussed. The group agreed to meet again after Christmas to discuss the possibility of the visiting team going to the hospital with wheelchair users.

Mental health – The group looked at feedback and an inpatients survey of the Glenbourne Unit – the write up will be circulated to the rest of the stewardship group, and linked to the PIPS survey. An area of concern is the feedback received from people with learning disabilities who are being treated at Glenbourne. Vicky has spoken to Paul Francombe, who is aware of the issues. Vicky will report back to the stewards at a later date.

Primary Care Service Accessibility – The meeting is planned for Tuesday 30th November. Some stewards said that they had not received the information – Christine will recirculate it.

4. Requests for involvement

- ★ LINK has been asked to participate in the *Improving Through Listening Group*. Vicky and Karen are to attend the January meeting and introduce LINK. A LINK ambassador may be asked to attend future meetings as there will be a lot of information sharing and feedback. Vicky will report back to the stewardship group, and asked for interested people to let us know if they would like to be involved in this.
- ★ *Peninsula Cancer Network* – A meeting is taking place on 15th December and it is highly probable that one of the other local LINKs will be involved. The opportunity to take part will also be put in the LINK bulletin to allow the wider membership to participate.
- ★ Due to time constraints, Vicky gave a quick overview of other events attended, commenting on the pleasing amount of feedback received from young people during the big youth event in the city, despite the noise levels.

5. Response to Consultation Documents

- ★ Vicky commented that very little response had been received about the two consultation documents, 'Information Revolution' (IT streamlining) and 'Greater Choice and Control' (regarding increased patient choice). She asked that the stewards try to look at the documents, and asked permission for her to put any comments received into the report. John urged stewards to make a response, as it is their chance to influence the set up of HealthWatch. Lois suggested that an extra meeting be held, but other stewards cited time constraints which did not make this possible. Vicky agreed to wait for further responses, and then pull them together to submit in the report before the deadline.

6 . Budget

A current budget sheet was circulated, and a brief breakdown of expenditure was given by Vicky, due to time constraints.

The meeting then entered Part 2.

7. Next meeting date

**Wednesday 8th December Issues meeting 6.00 – 7.00 pm.
7.30pm Stewardship Group Christmas meal, Heaven Restaurant, Exeter Street**